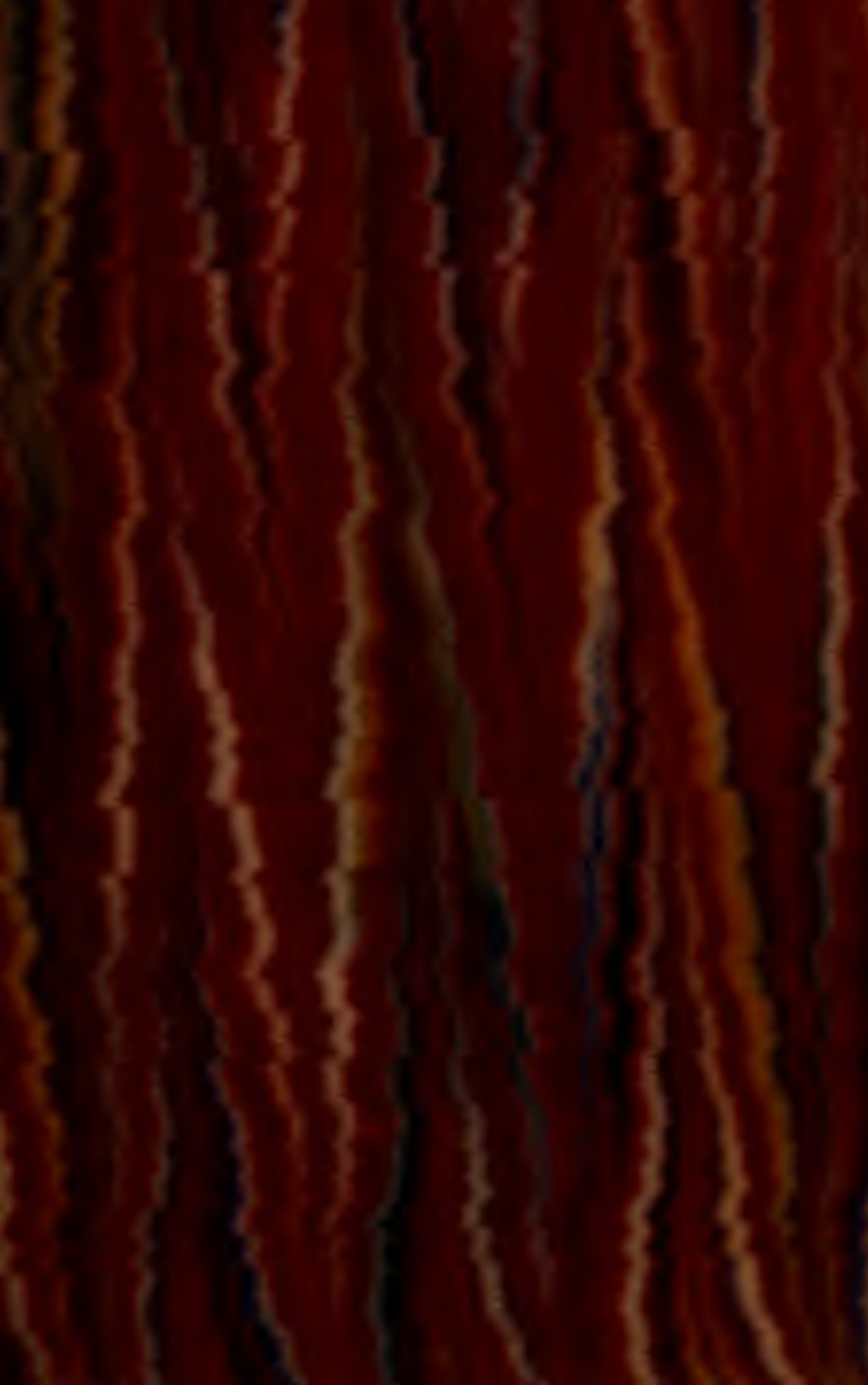


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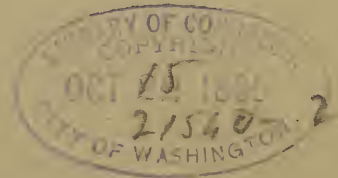
THE PROFIT AND PLEASURE
OF BIBLE STUDY.

BY

40
GEORGE F. PENTECOST, M.A.

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY

REVS. JOSEPH COOK AND J. H. VINCENT, D.D.



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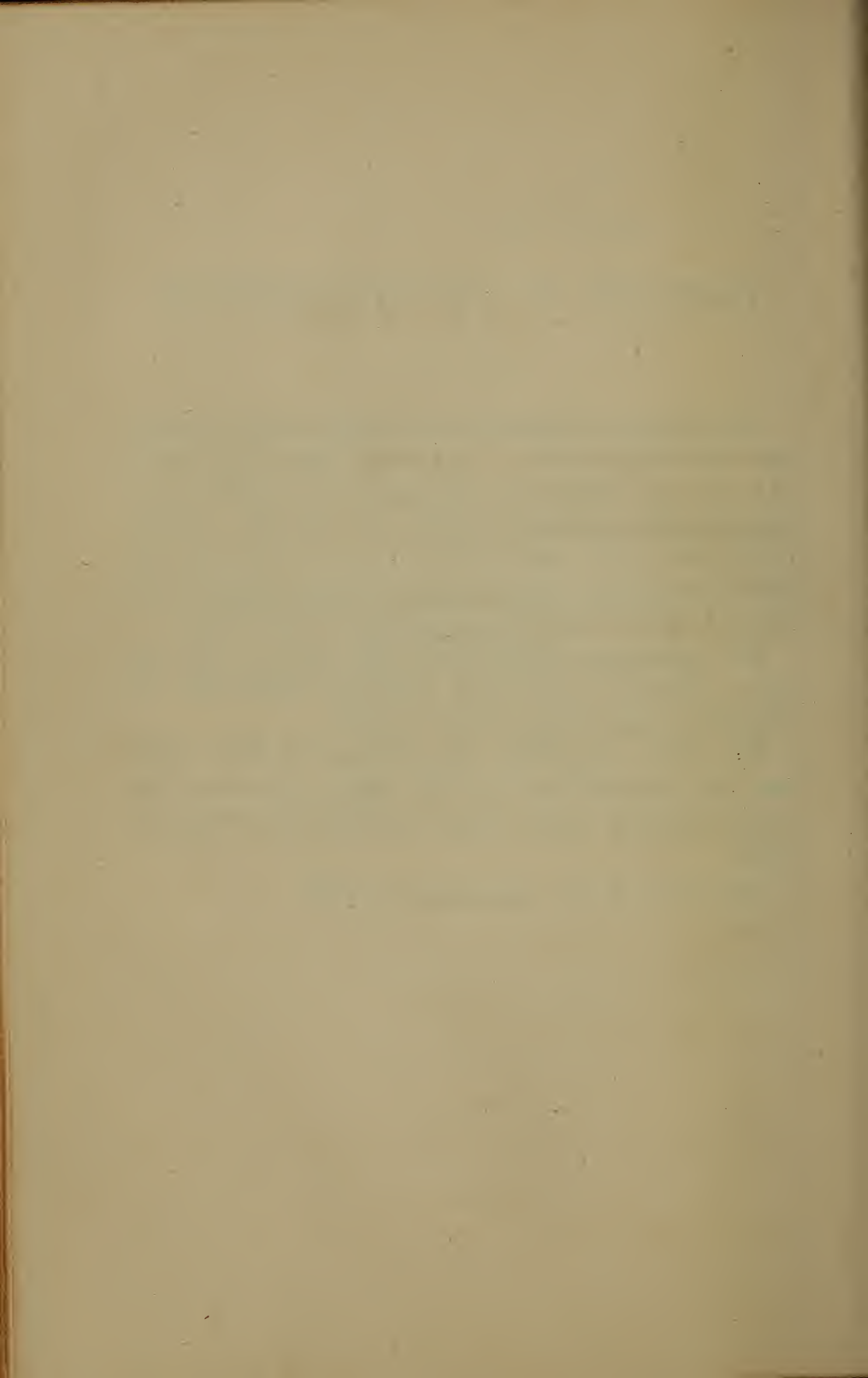
PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

It is a matter of pleasure to an author to know that he has not written in vain. In giving forth a new edition of "IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK" it is gratifying to know that the continued demand for successive editions of this little work, both in this country and abroad, indicates an unfailing interest in those books which help the reader to better study for himself the Word of God.

Few important changes have been made in this edition; otherwise it has been carefully revised and all references to the Word of God verified.

The author gratefully acknowledges the favor which has been accorded to the little volume by more than *forty thousand readers* since the first edition was published.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., September 10, 1885.



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INTRODUCTION.

BY REV. JOSEPH COOK.

It is well known in Boston that whenever Mr. Moody was obliged to be absent from the great assemblies or the sacred inquiry-rooms of the Boston Tabernacle, in the winter of 1876, Mr. Pentecost was the only man who could fill the gap. I heard Mr. Pentecost several times in those days, and rejoiced greatly in his remarkable endowments and their employment in the service of biblical truth. The great characteristic of Mr. Pentecost's preaching is its saturation, not only with a knowledge, but with the very spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

His *Hints on Bible Reading* have a precious aroma of deep Christian experience, reminding one of the best passages of Bengel's *Gnomon*, a work for many generations renowned among scholars, not less for its piety than for its learning. Mr. Pentecost has been, very evidently, accustomed to study the Bible, not only with the microscope of critical scholarship, but also with that spiritual telescope through which one can look only when on his knees.

Providence has endowed Mr. Pentecost with extraordinary strength and intensity of feeling, and has led him through a religious experience which has harmonized his intellect and his heart, and gathered up all the powers of

his being to be used as a single thunderbolt in the hands of his conscience. I value exceedingly his unapologetic courage and incisiveness in attacking fashionable evils in the Church. This knowledge of society and of human nature has been widened to a breadth very uncommon, as I believe, in a man of his years, and is consecrated wholly to the service of an undiluted and aggressive Christianity.

My prayers are joined with those of the many communities to which he has ministered in holy things, that his life as an Evangelist may, by the Divine blessing, bring forth permanent and abundant fruit an hundred and a thousandfold.

JOSEPH COOK.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

INTRODUCTION.

BY REV. J. H. VINCENT, D.D.

IN response to a universally felt human need there comes to us, among the many books of this world, one Book which claims to be divine in its aim, authorship, construction, preservation, and power. It is the oldest of existing books. It is the wisest of all books. There is nothing from the gardens of the far East which excels it in beauty and sweetness. It is a book full of sublimity. It is as pure as it is sublime.

The unity of the Bible is one of its greatest marvels. Coming to us through forty different minds—these minds thinking and recording through a period of more than fifteen hundred years, located in widely separated sections of the eastern world—it is throughout a unit.

The contents of the Bible are varied—History, Geography, Architecture, Archæology, Biography, Poetry, Geology, Biology, Zoology, Botany, Meteorology, Ethnology, Doctrine, Ethics, Prophecy, Metaphysics. It is in itself the marvel of marvels among literary productions, and the source of all the deepest, wisest, strongest, sweetest, holiest things that have appeared in any literature to this day ; and it has been an inspiration through the ages to artists, authors, statesmen, poets, and philosophers. It is the foundation-rock of the civilization

that to to-day dominates the planet. It is the cornerstone of wise and enlightened governments ; the founder of colleges and universities ; the text-book of sages, students, and babes ; the book of the school ; the book of the family ; the book of the pulpit ; the book of the sick-chamber. As this life fades away the Bible becomes a lamp from the everlasting life, illuminating the darkest hour. Such is the marvellous volume which has been given to the Church and to the world "for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

There are depths below depths in this deep volume. The superficial student who climbs to its summits may find flowers and fruits on the surface. Here is a soil whence may come to him still richer and worthier products. Underneath that soil are layers of rocks and veins of precious mineral, and here and there glittering gems of rare value. Deeper still there are caverns dark as night to the worldling, but rich with untold brilliancy to the spiritually enlightened, and underneath all are the firm foundations of doctrine, concerning the infinite God, his character, his essential being, his will, his history, his providence, his holy and everlasting purposes.

No two persons can look upon the heavens at night and behold the same number of stars ; nor does any one star have precisely the same appearance to them. And there is an infinite variety and unlimited amount of truth contained in the Bible. There are revelations to individuals, and perhaps no two can see precisely the same truth or truths in the same relations. Everything depends upon the capacity and spiritual perception of the

student. A child will delight in the phenomenal parts of the book—the vivid pictures, the living conversations, the interesting and remarkable combinations. His venerable grandsire, whose thought has penetrated beyond the letter, will scarcely notice now the phenomenal portions of the Word which were once so interesting to him. He sees underneath it all, out of a deep spiritual experience, a divine meaning shining out of every sentence and glowing between the lines. He hears the voice of God. He enjoys the raptures which come through a personal appropriation of the divine nature.

Between these two extremes—the child and the sage—we find the advanced student who dwells in the literature of the Scriptures, who delights in its ethical standards, in its metaphysical unfoldings, in its marvellous delineations of human character, in its displays of divine wisdom counteracting human designs and bringing to pass among men wonders of goodness and of grace. The child, the student, the sage, and the saint, study the same Word ; and each finds in it somewhat for himself : and the degree of his insight depends in part upon the amount of knowledge which he has concerning the contents of the Book as a whole ; and above all upon the spiritual tone which he brings to his researches.

Whatever tends to the systematic, thorough, analytical, and scientific method in Bible study will be of immense advantage to every grade of pupil. The geographical elements of Scripture have apparently no more to do with the complete picture of divine truth than does the study of plaster casts by the artist who produces a painting ; but the days spent by the artist in the study of the casts prepare him for the worthier work

of the after-days. There is nothing in the Bible which is beneath the careful scrutiny of scientific minds ; and the more thoroughly and exhaustively its different elements are investigated, the greater the joy to him who, with pure, devout, spiritual insight, is able afterward to read the innermost things of the Word.

We rejoice, therefore, in every movement by the Church, and by cultured and sacred writers in the Church, which tends to the more thorough, systematic, and scientific study of the Word of God—whether it be by the aid of simple diagrams in the Sabbath-school Primary Class, the carefully constructed questions of the intermediate class, the analytical methods of the adult class, the textual combinations of the “ Bible reading,” or the deep, thoughtful, prayerful, fervent penetration of truth in its highest forms by the soul enlightened and possessed by the Holy Ghost.

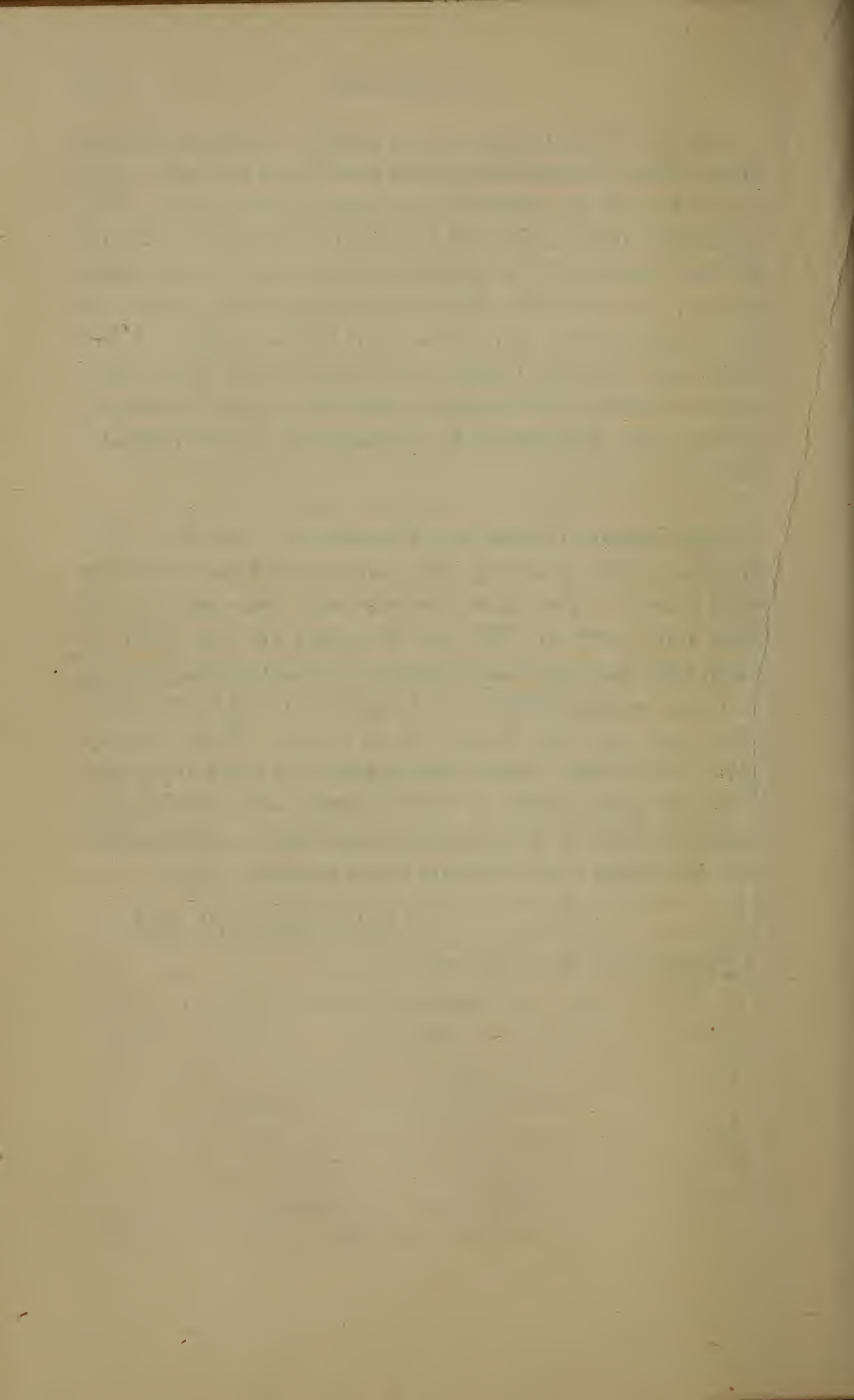
The book before us has peculiar value in that it presents in a most condensed form the wisest thoughts concerning the spirit, aim, and methods of biblical study ; and because of its sensible suggestions to aid minister, teacher, and private Christian, in this important work. It is a plain, practical help to intelligent Scripture study. The first edition has already had a wide circulation and has received cordial tributes from experienced and cultured students. One says, “ It is full of marrow and fatness :” another, “ It secures interest ; supplies motive ; and tells how the thing is done :” another, “ It is fragrant with the aroma of the Word, a sort of herbarium :” and Joseph Cook says concerning it, “ Its chapters are mountain summits, laden with the dew of Hermon.” These tributes are all deserved.

Let all Christians of every grade, however diverse their capacities or needs, study the Word of God. Out of all the study somewhat of good must come. The apparently dead trunk and branches of the Word planted in the garden of the youthful mind may to-day seem useless, but when the life of the spring-time comes, at the rising of the sun in the heart of the pupil, lo ! life shall pass through trunk, limb, branch, and twig, until the buds swell, the blossoms shine out in their fragrance, and the tree shall stand in verdure and fruitfulness before us.

The centaur Chiron was the tutor of Achilles. He fed the young child on the marrow of lions and other wild beasts to give him strength and courage. Let us feed our youth on the rich doctrines of the Word of God, that they may have power to resist temptation, and to make bold, aggressive war against evil of every kind. That we may thus teach, let us study. That we may give, let us have. And while guided by our author into a deeper appreciation of biblical truth, and aided in the habitual study of it for personal growth, we shall guide and aid others who need and covet the same help.

J. H. VINCENT, D.D.

PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY.



"BLESSED LORD, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast *the blessed hope of everlasting life*, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

“ God hath endowed us with different faculties, suitable and proportional to the different objects that engage them. We discover sensible things by our senses, rational things by our reason, things intellectual by understanding ; but divine and celestial things He has reserved for the exercise of our faith, which is a kind of divine and superior sense in the soul. Our reason and understanding may at some times snatch a glimpse, but cannot take a steady and adequate prospect of things so far above their reach and sphere. Thus, by the help of natural reason, I may know there is a God, the first cause and original of all things ; but his essence, attributes, and will, are hid within the veil of inaccessible light, and cannot be discerned by us but through faith in his divine revelation. He that walks without this light walks in darkness, though he may strike out some faint and glimmering sparkles of his own. And he that, out of the gross and wooden dictates of his natural reason, carves out a religion to himself, is but a more refined idolater than those who worship stocks and stones, hammering an idol out of his fancy, and adoring the works of his own imagination. For this reason God is nowhere said to be jealous, but upon the account of his worship.”

Pilgrim's Progress, Part III.

P R E L U D E .

Three Facts : The Bible, Jesus, and the Christian Church—Sir Walter Scott and the Bible—The Eternal Word and the Written Word—Christ's Incarnation in the Scriptures—Jesus the Key to the Bible.

THE student of Christianity does not have to look very far or long in the direction of his study to behold three marvellous facts, each of them pre-eminent by comparison with all other similar facts.

First : THE BIBLE. There is no other book that can compare with it ; even if we only consider it as a book, without reference to its divine origin. The most wonderful book the world has ever seen : its power and influence on men, on nations, on civilization—for centuries, have been untold, there is no denying this.

Second : JESUS CHRIST. Among men there is none like Him : all agree to this. Though his life was brief on the earth, his country small and insignificant, his immediate influence limited to a few common people, his death a cruel and ignominious one—though He wrote no books, founded no organization, and disappeared from the world nearly two thousand years ago, after only three years of public life—his influence and power have outlasted that of all the men of his time or of any time. His name is enshrined in the hearts of countless millions, without reference to country, government, clime, or circumstances in life—high or low, bond or free, cultured or ignorant. His sway over the hearts and con-

sciences of men is greater than that of all kings and earthly powers. His name is the symbol of everything good and noble, loving and beneficent ; the inspiration of the best of the living, the only comfort of the dying. Without stopping to account for this phenomenal influence and power—greater to-day than ever before—we only call attention to it as an unchallenged fact.

The third fact is : THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, the result or outcome of the Book and the Man—the greatest organization the world ever saw. It has outlived all empires, governments, and nations, and has penetrated all ; it is world-wide, and exists wherever the Book and the Man are known.

But we have to do in this little book with the two former facts only. Without the Bible Jesus has no *historical* existence ; and without Jesus the Bible has no vital power and no religious significance. We wish to consider these two preëminent facts ; their relation to each other ; and the significance and power of them both with reference to ourselves.

When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he called his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, and said : “ Read to me.” “ Out of which book, Sir Walter ? ” said Mr. Lockhart. The dying poet, looking at him earnestly, said : “ Lockhart, there is but one book. Read to me out of the Bible.” Happy the man who has come to understand that the Bible is *the* book in all the world, and that Jesus Christ is the only person to whom he can yield his heart in supreme and undivided allegiance !

If Jesus Christ was “ God manifest in the flesh,” it is also true that the Bible, in a very high and important sense, is a manifestation of Jesus Christ in the word. The written word is the living portraiture of the Eternal and Incarnate Word who was “ made flesh and dwelt

among us.” It is this that makes Christ and the Book inseparable. Should we take Christ out of the Bible there would be no Bible left.

Thus we come to this conclusion : Jesus Christ is the key to the interpretation of the Bible. In reading its sacred pages ; in contemplating its great characters ; in unfolding its symbols ; in interpreting its types ; in studying the history of the chosen people, and even the history of the creation ; in seeking the interpretation of its great prophecies—take Jesus Christ as the key to unlock all. He who reads with Jesus as the key will read understandingly and be made wise unto salvation ; otherwise he will only become wise in his own conceits, and probably wrest the Scriptures to his own condemnation.

"IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK."

CHAPTER I.

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

A Manifold Book—Many Writers—Great Variety of Matter—Not a "heterogeneous jumble"—Unity of the Bible compared with Unity in Nature—Principal Dawson on Physiography—Science following in the wake of the Bible—The Bible a Development—The Unity of the Bible an evidence of its Divine Origin.

UPON opening this book, and hastily turning over its pages, we are first struck with the fact that it is made up of sixty-six different tracts, or lesser books. We next discover that these books were written at different times, covering a period of more than fifteen hundred years ; and that they were, of course, the composition, humanly speaking, of many different writers, among whom were educated and uneducated men, statesmen and peasants, kings and herdsmen, profound philosophers and simple-minded fishermen ; prophets, apostles, kings, and priests ; just men and their helpers, as Paul and Luke and Silas. We also find that these books were written in different countries ; in different languages ; under different circumstances, and were addressed to different peoples—Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, Greeks and barbarians.

We also notice the great variety of its contents. His-

tories—of the creation ; of races, nations, and individuals ; divine institutions and ordinances ; laws for life toward God and man ; revelations of the mind of God, and the judgment of Heaven touching all things here below ; the opening of the world to come, revealing the destiny of men, both of the just and the unjust ; prophecies and the historic record of their fulfilment ; the whole culminating in the New Testament Scriptures, which set forth Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, crucified, buried, raised again from the dead, having purged our sins, and sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. i. 3) ; the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven giving demonstration and power to the preached Gospel (Acts i.) whereby guilty sinners are converted to God and added to the Church (Acts ii. 47), and finally through death and resurrection united with Christ in his eternal glory (Rev. xx., xxi.).

But now what of all this variety in books, authors, matter, and manner, and in the circumstances under which they were written ? Does it follow that the Bible is a “heterogeneous jumble” of ancient histories or legends, of myths, religious speculations, and recorded superstitions ? By no means : no more than it follows that because my body is made up of a great variety of members, each differing from the other in structure, office work, position, and relative honor, it is therefore a “heterogeneous jumble” of legs, arms, feet, hands, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, fingers, toes, flesh, blood, bones, muscles, tissues, and skin. There are many members in the one body, and all the members of that one body, being many, are “one body.” So also is the Bible one book, though made up of many books, each differing from the other as each member in the body differs from all others.

Each book in the Bible is animated by the same spirit, and forms an essential part of the whole. We are not afraid of pushing this point too far, for it is most necessary that we should understand it. The great diversity in the books of the Bible is not only entirely consistent with its glorious unity, but in a very important sense necessary to it.

Who would think of denying the unity of this material world—the great book of nature—because it is written not only in the rocks, but in the sea, on myriad leaves, in the flowers, and in the meadows, in the constitution of man, and on the butterfly's wings; and spelled out in part in the starry constellations of the sky, and sung in the song of birds? How vast the book of nature! how deep its mysteries! and how seemingly contradictory some of its revelations! How the record of creation has been written in language of fire and storm, with the pen of ice, and ink of water; in the steady on-flowing river, and in the rending earthquake! This grand book of nature has among it, scribes, prophets, priests, and kings, its soaring poets, and its sweet psalmists. In kingly and peasant fashion, too, has it been written; and yet who denies its unity? Geology, astronomy, optics, chemistry, and biology: how many are the books! how different the subject treated by each! put them all together, and you have the story of creation. Each book by itself is a fragment; all put together make one grand whole. As yet the revelation of God in nature has not been put together: all is fragmentary still; so far, at least, as we have spelled out the story from the rocks, earth, air, and sea, and from the living creatures, and from those dead ages ago.

Principal Dawson says, in a recent article in the *Princeton Review*: "Subjects" in the natural and

physical sciences, “ once thought distinct are tending to coalesce. This is markedly the case with the great natural forces of light, heat, and electricity. It occurs also in the domain of organization among animals and plants, broad resemblances being observed where before only differences were discerned. The spectroscope has united optics and chemistry with one another and with astronomy. Geology has welded together in the past history of the earth a great number of the physical sciences. Very recently a text-book has been prepared to teach these relationships under the name of physiography—a name which may eventually become well known and highly important. It is undoubtedly the duty of science, while pursuing actively the duty of research along individual lines, to study practically this consolidation of the sciences.”

In this testimony of a great scientist to the law of unity in diversity in nature, we have a confession of how slowly and painfully science is creeping along in the wake of the Bible ; recognizing in its sphere what is most apparent in the realm of revelation. Let young Christian readers then, instead of being staggered at what may seem at first glance to be confusion, rejoice that the God of nature and of the Bible is one God ; and that just as there is unity in the organization of the material universe, so full of diversity, so there is unity in the organization of the Bible, though it be made up of great diversity.

And the more we study the Bible in its parts and in its unity, the more we shall see that its structure is organic, and not mechanical ; that is, that it is not put together like a machine, but is organized as the members of the human body are organized, by the power of the one life and spirit which animate every part.

Upon careful study of the Word of God, it will be found to be a true development. From Genesis to Revelation there is a steady march and progress of truth. As the flower seed dropped into the ground begins to open and unroll itself, first into a little white and tender shoot, then into hardier stalk, branches, leaves, buds, flowers, with all the variety of parts—corona, stamen, petals, and leaves, exquisitely colored and delicately perfumed, displaying a miracle of development ; so we may say of the Book of Genesis, it is the germ book of the Bible.

I am persuaded that the whole of the word of God lies hidden in Genesis, just as the flower lies hidden in the seed. It may be that in some parts it is hidden deeper even than the possibility of microscopic discovery ; but so also are many of the wonders and beauties of the flower, and yet we know they have all been unfolded from that little seed. Every truth concerning God and man is hinted at here. God as creator, as moral governor, as providence and as Saviour, is seen in this Book. Man in nature and in grace is brought before us—the law and the gospel are brought to view—in this Book. And so on and on as book after book was written, as institution and dispensation were brought out in clearer and sharper outline, and more minute detail, it was but the further unfolding and bringing out into fuller light the wonderful truths hinted at in Genesis.

The progressive development of this revelation in the Bible, is, after all, a chief proof of its Divine origin—not only as to the whole, but as to each part or separate book. If we were reduced to one line of proof—which we are not—to establish the inspiration of the various books of the Bible, we would unhesitatingly take that which is to be found in the Bible itself. The Bible is

not a mechanism, but an organism—the same Divine Spirit breathing through and animating every part. It has no artificial members, no incongruous parts. There is not a single deformity or monstrosity about it. As we know the difference between the thumb of a human hand and that of a monkey, so by internal evidence we know that there are no human members in this Divine body. A peach graft will grow upon an apricot stock ; but it is quite easy to distinguish between the wood of the peach and the wood of the apricot into which it is grafted. The mysterious life shuttle that weaves a human body never weaves a monkey ; nor does the shuttle that weaves a monkey ever weave a man. Neither does mere human thought weave books like those found in the Bible.

The general pattern of the Bible is unlike that of any other book, ancient or modern ; and the closer the comparison the more evident the organic difference. The various books making up the whole fit into the Bible, as the stones and cedar beams quarried from the hills, hewn from the forests, and fashioned to the plan of the temple, went into the sacred edifice, each in the place designed for it. The proof that any stone, or beam, or peg belonged to the temple was found in the fact that there was a place for it in the building, and that it fitted into that place. So of the various books of the Bible—they fit. More than that, they all bear the mark of their Divine Author.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

Incomparable superiority of the Bible—An inquirer—The Vedas and Zend-Avesta—A statement of truth downward from God to man—The majesty and authority of the biblical style—Human argumentation—Job and his friends—Not unscientific or unphilosophic—Nothing to fear from current scientific scepticism—Sceptical science becoming less haughty.

THE most casual reader of the Bible, if he have any serious thoughtfulness of mind, must remark its unique and extraordinary character, differing as it does in its structure and matter, its spirit and style, from all other books. Side by side the best and most celebrated of them, its incomparable superiority is almost instantly recognized. Here and there there have been found passages from other books that have been thought to compare favorably with some of the sublime teachings of the Bible. But it has been remarked that even when precepts and moral teachings similar to or identical with those of either earlier or later ancients are found in the Bible, especially in the teachings of Jesus, they “receive a different setting, and a more heavenly light is in them. A diamond in a dark or dimly lighted room is not the same thing as a diamond in the track of a sun-beam.” *

The simplicity and naturalness of the Bible are most striking. Where else can be found such graphic pictures

* Newman Smythe.

of paternal and domestic life? The straightforward delineation of its most conspicuous characters; its record of the sins of God's people with the same impartial pen as is used for the setting forth of their virtues; its lofty moral tone; its sublimity of thought; as well as its superhuman authority—all bespeak its unique character. For like the Master, of whom it is the constant and consistent witness, its words are with authority. It never speculates or halts in its teaching, but drives straight to the mark in its ever-recurring “Thus saith the Lord,” in the Old Testament, and in the “Verily, verily, I say unto you” of the Master.

I met a young man some months ago in the inquiry-room in Hartford, and I said to him, as to others whom I met there nightly, “Well, my young friend, are you a Christian?” He replied, “I am not; but I am an inquirer after truth.” “What is your trouble?” I asked. “Why,” said he, “I do not know *which* Bible to believe, or whether they are all alike to be believed, each one for what it is worth.” “What do you mean?” I replied: “I do not understand you. There is but *one* Bible.” “Oh, yes, there are many Bibles. There are the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta and the Koran, but I do not count much upon the Koran; the others, however, are very ancient books, and contain the religion of the larger part of the inhabitants of the earth.”

I found he had been reading Mr. Max Müller's studies in comparative religions, and was much taken up with the idea that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, was only a Jewish version of the “more ancient” religions of Aryan races. I was at first disposed to ignore his difficulties and pass him by, but on second thought I felt it to be my duty to try and meet them.

Since then I have found a great many persons who

while they are in no sense students or scholars, have read some book or magazine article by which they have been inoculated with the thought that the Bible is only one of many equally ancient and equally trustworthy religious books. And so it may be well just here to have our attention called to the difference between the Bible and these two of the more famous books.

The Vedas are a very ancient collection of sacred hymns addressed to the fancied gods of nature, and make no pretension to be in any sense a revelation. They are the outpourings of the natural religious sentiment. The Zend-Avesta is an ancient *speculation* into the origin of things. It does not pretend to be *revelation* of the truth, but only a human effort to account for and explain things that are seen. But the Bible differs from both in a most marked manner. The Bible is the *revelation of God*, and the history of creation: it declares the origin of things and of man, showing God to be the creator and author of all, and states our relation, not to nature, but to Him.

Now the difference between a speculation and a revelation is this: One is an effort of the human mind to account for things seen, and so make discovery of the things that are not seen; an effort to leap from the earth outward and upward into the presence and mystery of the unseen and eternal. The other is a positive *statement of the truth* out and downward from God to man. We notice that the Bible, when speaking of God, never gives an *opinion*, never speculates. It always, in simple and majestic measure, *declares*—as in the opening sentence of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” That is so utterly different, both in matter and manner, from any sentence ever framed by philosopher or religious speculator, that it almost goes

without saying that these could not have been the words of man ; that they are the words of God spoken by man as he was moved of God to speak, in order that man might have the *truth*, and have it *at once* and simply, in a single breath.

The majestic sweep of the first chapter of Genesis is so great, packing away in a compass hardly greater than one page of this little book the entire account of the creation of the world and all things therein, that on its face it bears the stamp of God rather than man. Think, if you can, of any human philosopher dashing off with a few bold strokes of his pen such an account of the creation.

If you want to read the finest specimen of human speculation and argumentation on record, turn to the divinely preserved debate between Job and his three friends recorded in the Book of Job (ii.—xxxi.). How the battle between Job and his three friends rages through those thirty chapters, until, weary with the conflict, they give over their arguments, drawn from observation, tradition, and law. Nothing was settled, until, exhausted, they all sat face to face defiant and unconvinced each by the other. Then it was that Elihu (xxxii.), moved by inspiration, set the *truth* before them all. The result was that they were dumb (*v.* 15), for they had but “darkened counsel by words without knowledge” (xxxviii. 2) ; and Job was humbled before God, saying, “Behold, I am vile : what shall I say unto Thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer : yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further” (xl. 4, 5). This book is a striking and remarkable illustration of the difference between speculation and revelation. And as it is supposed that the Book of Job is the most ancient book in the

Bible, if not in the world, this fact alone would go far to clear up the perplexity that exists in the minds of some as to their comparative worth and the true relation existing between ancient writings and the Bible.

Still another point. Many, especially among the younger and partly educated portions of every community, are troubled with what they term the scientific difficulties of the Bible. We can only touch upon this point. Because the Bible is not a speculation as to the origin of things, but an authoritative statement of the truth from God to man, it does not follow that its revealed truth is unphilosophical. And so, because the Bible does not contain a scientific account of creation, and is not written in the terms of the modern scientist, it does not follow that the Bible is scientifically inaccurate in its statements. It must be borne in mind that the Bible was written ages before the birth of the modern sciences. And had it been written in scientific language it would have been to the people then living, and even to the great mass of people now living, an utterly unintelligible book—as most scientific books are now, unintelligible except to the educated few.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose, for an instant, that any well-ascertained fact of science has yet been shown to be in conflict with the scriptural account of creation. We are aware that the assertion to this effect is often made ; but such assertions have never been proved. Indeed, it is becoming more evident every day that science and revelation are drawing nearer together ; that is—that science is drawing nearer, in her domain, to the truth as revealed in the Word of God. But were this not so, and were it shown that there was a real and thoroughly demonstrated error in the Bible account of creation, so that we must needs honestly give

up Moses and the Bible, to whom should we go for the truth? We might adapt the words of Joshua (xxiv. 15) and say, “And if it seem evil unto you to believe the Bible, choose ye this day whom ye will believe, whether the pantheistic or materialistic philosophers who speculated before the rise of modern science, or the atheistic, theistic or agnostic scientists;” for there be some who say science teaches there is no God; and some who say there must be a God; and others who say we cannot know if there be a God. Certainly science is at present on a wide sea of discovery in many boats, guided, each boat, by the *theory* of its particular occupant.

Two things are certain: (1.) Neither philosophy nor science has succeeded thus far in impeaching the accuracy of the Bible statement. (2.) They have as yet reached no common ground of agreement among themselves. So that the Christian need not, as yet (and I am sure he never will), be in any fear from the assaults of the students of science. It is, indeed, no new experience for the Bible to meet the shock of scepticism. For centuries it has been the object of attack, always fierce and relentless; and for centuries it has endured and beaten back its assailants. As a granite rock in the sea meets and hurls back into the ocean the fierce waves that roll in upon it, so the Bible has met and beaten back by the power of its immovable and eternal truth all its assailants. Like a rock in the sea rooted in a great submarine but unseen formation, it has sometimes seemed to be overwhelmed by the surging fury of the waves; but it has ever emerged unshaken and triumphant: the only effect has been to sweep away some human theological structure or false system of interpretation built upon it, but not growing out of it.

In this connection it is well to bear in mind that scept-

tical scientists have of late become far less haughty in their criticisms of the Bible, and far more humble in their estimate of their own knowledge (as it becomes every student, whether of science or theology, to be) ; for says an eminent scientific writer on the rights and duties of science : “ It becomes science to confess with much humility how far it falls short of the full comprehension of nature ; and to abstain conscientiously from *premature* conclusions. The rapid progress of discovery in recent times only makes more plain to us the fact that the extension of our knowledge *implies the extension of our ignorance* ; that everywhere the progress of our knowledge leads us to unsolvable mysteries. It would be easy to furnish illustrations from every branch of science ; but geology and biology are very fertile in them.” It has seemed due to many honest but uninformed minds, especially among the young, to say so much by way of recognition of their new-found difficulties, and also by way of indicating the outline of answer.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE NOT A SCIENTIFIC, BUT A RELIGIOUS BOOK.

Not intended to inform the scientific mind, but to instruct the religious intelligence of man, and meet the wants of the religious nature—Stands over against our soul hunger and thirst, demonstrated by religious experience—It is self-proving, harmonizing with highest reason—Its truth revealed to faith, not to human wisdom.

THE Bible is not a scientific, but a *religious* book, intended not to inform the scientific and philosophic understanding, but to instruct the religious intelligence of man in those things which make for the life that now is, and that which is to come (1 Tim. iv. 8). What a blessed fact it is that we thirsty mortals can drink a glass of pure water and quench our burning thirst, without having to know the chemical analysis of water, or how it was originally created. We are thirsty beings ; and if our thirst is not slaked we shall die. Meantime water is provided : it is offered to us, and we are told that it will slake our thirst, that it was provided in nature for that very purpose ; and without stopping to have it analyzed, we drink it and live. We thus experimentally prove it to be water, and that all that was claimed for it is true.

We likewise are religious beings, and if we do not find truth, and love, and happiness, and regeneration, and eternal life, and resurrection, we shall die and perish. God's Word is brought to us ; it contains truths, or at least statements and promises, that stand over against

these spiritual hungerings and thirstings, just as food and drink stand over against the hunger and thirst of the body. By faith we take hold of these promises, and the hunger and thirst of our souls are satisfied. We know the truth of the Bible, therefore, not by metaphysical or intellectual demonstration, but by experimental proof, as real in the sphere of our religious nature as scientific demonstration is real in the realm of matter.

Two and two make four ; that is mathematics : hydrogen and oxygen in certain proportions make water ; that is science : Christ and Him crucified is the power and wisdom of God for salvation ; that is revelation. But how do you know ? Put two and two together, and you have four ; count and see. Put hydrogen and oxygen together, and you have water ; taste and prove. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved : believe, and thou shalt know. The last is as clear a demonstration as the others.

As a practical necessity we do not require to know the mysteries involved in our own being, and in all the provisions of nature made for our well-being on the earth. It is well to understand the chemistry of food and drink ; but it would not only be unwise, but might be fatal, for us to postpone eating and drinking until we had mastered the chemistry. And so again we may derive great satisfaction and benefit in discovering a philosophical and scientific adjustment of revelation ; but we would be consummately foolish if we refused to believe—and thus practically to demonstrate, by believing—the truth of God's Word, until we had found the philosophical and scientific adjustment of it.

Our Lord said when He was in the world, " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and

hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. xi. 25). God does not reveal Himself and his truth to the wisdom of the philosopher or to the prudence of the scientist ; but He is easily found by childlike faith. " For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. For the Jews (the scientists) require a sign, and the Greeks (the philosophers) seek after wisdom ; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called (believers), both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. . . . Not in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God " (1 Cor. i. 21—24 ; ii. 4, 5, *et seq.*).

While philosophers and scientists have been disputing and treading over and over again the dreary paths of pantheism and materialism, trying to put God in a crucible or under a microscope, millions of souls in the ages past, and thousands in the daily present, have been and are finding God and Christ and salvation, to the joy and rejoicing of their souls ; living in the power of an endless life even here ; some meeting death triumphantly even at the stake, and others peacefully passing into the presence of Him whom, having not seen on earth, they have yet known by faith and the power of his presence in them.

The engineers who directed the work of the Hoosac Tunnel, started two gangs of men from opposite sides of the mountain. So accurate was their survey that when they met midway in the mountain, the walls of the excavations approaching from the different starting points

joined within less than an inch. The practical working of the bore proved the scientific accuracy of the survey. Man, starting from the side of his human spiritual need reaching out and upward toward God, is met by the revelation in Christ coming out and downward from God, a revelation which exactly fits and covers his need. This perfect match between the human need and the heavenly supply is the perfect proof of the Divine origin of the Bible. Just as color is intuitive to sight, harmony to the musical sense, beauty to the sense of the beautiful, so is God's Word intuitive to the spiritual consciousness. Coleridge was wont to say : " I know the Bible is true, because it finds me."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE AN INSPIRED BOOK.

The Bible not of human origin—Holy men of old—Various theories of Inspiration—A practical view—Does not extend to translations—Does not cover “errors crept in unawares”—Such errors do not destroy or invalidate the inspiration of the Bible—Popular or learned criticism should not shake our minds—Inspiration covers the historical records—Great variety of contents in the Bible—The record of sin and sinful action not a part of the moral teaching of the Bible—Must distinguish between the record of human opinions and authoritative Divine instruction—Matter of inspiration of relative importance—Difference between inspiration and revelation.

THE Bible is not of human origin, though written by human hands. Its truths and teachings came *through* human hearts and heads, as well as *out of* them. The inspired men who wrote the Bible did not write by their own will ; that is, their own thoughts and their own will were never “the rule or the reason” why any of the things which they wrote were written. But they wrote the thoughts and the words which were given them by the Holy Spirit, as says Paul of his writings and preaching : “We speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. ii. 13).

It is true, then, that it was written by men : but “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. i. 21), the “Spirit of Christ which was in them” (1 Pet. i. 11), signifying the truth concerning things and men and actions, in their relation to God ;

testifying to the world the will and law of God, and making plain all things appertaining to man and his salvation. The Bible, therefore, when it speaks for God—as in its “Thus saith the Lord”—is an infallible and unchangeable declaration of *truth*, not to be modified by adding to or taking therefrom in any degree or sense.

There are many *theories* of inspiration ; but it is not necessary for the practical purpose of the Christian to have definitely fixed in his mind any one of the many nice distinctions that wise and learned men have made in declaring or teaching their various theories. All devout men agree that the *substance* of revelation is the expression of the thoughts and will of God ; that the historical records of the doings and sayings of men, preserved in the Bible, are truthful records. Others go farther, and hold that not only is the substance of the Bible inspired, but that the language, even the very words, the grammatical structure, the style and mode of expression, were all immediately chosen and directed by the Holy Spirit ; that the writers were mere amanuenses, and wrote under the dictation of the Spirit. Some hold that they were conscious of this dictation when they wrote and spoke ; and others that, while they were infallibly moved to speak and write the very words, they were not conscious of anything farther than that the Spirit of God was upon them, and that they spake in their own words, not knowing that they were being impelled to the choice of them.

Some hold that the degree of inspiration was variable in the different writers, and according to the matter they had in hand ; that, therefore, while some parts of the Bible are absolutely inspired, other parts of it—especially its historical portions—were written by good men who were largely under the influence of the Spirit, and

yet not so dominated by Him that they were infallible in their writings ; and that, therefore, we must not accept many of the historical records as being literally true ; but that we must read the Bible as a whole, and come to such conclusions of truth as best we may. But this is so vague a theory that it may be counted as outside the pale of the inspiration theories. It seems to us, to a great extent, to be a waste of time to try to settle all the nice points of the multitudinous theories. It is enough for us to know that these Scriptures, the historical records and all, come to us with God's seal affixed to them ; that they are final in all matters of faith and practice ; that they declare the will of God to us, and are his authoritative statements.

Let us bear in mind that there is a vast difference between a *fact* and the *theory* of a fact. Most of our troubles grow not out of the facts in the case, but out of the theories concerning the facts. For instance, we all agree that Christ died for our sins ; that by his death He made atonement for us ; and that we are saved by, and on account of, that Sacrifice and the offering of Himself up to God. We agree upon the fact, but there are almost as many *theories* of the atonement as there are men who have written upon it. We do not say that we ought not to inquire *how* it is that we are saved by Him, or in what sense “He was made sin for us,” or “bore our sins ;” but we say, practically, it is enough for us to know that “He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures ; that He was buried ; and that He rose again, according to the Scriptures ;” and that we are saved by this fact of his death, burial, and resurrection. (1 Cor. xv. 1—4.)

Whatever the *theory* of the fact may be, lay hold on the *fact* that his death is that on account of which God

can and does save sinners, and without which, or apart from which, He does not and cannot save them. Therefore let us root our minds and hearts in the great essential facts of the Bible, and leave them open for such further light as may shine in from the Word and Spirit of God enabling us to form a correct theory.

It is the *truth*, and not the *theory* of the truth, that we want. The "new birth" is a great fact as taught by our Saviour first to Nicodemus (John iii.). I may have my theory as to Regeneration, and it may differ somewhat from yours ; and yet we both agree as to the fact, and by his grace we both enjoy the experience of it. Let us agree there, and both rejoice together, that being in Christ Jesus we have become new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17). If I have dwelt long on the difference between truth and the theories of truth, it is because I think it a most important distinction to be kept in mind ; and because I am sure that much precious time and many golden opportunities of possessing truth are wasted and lost in a vain and useless debate about *theories*. No doubt many souls miss salvation by grasping at theories, instead of being saved by laying hold of the *saving fact*.

Let us not fall into the mistake of believing that inspiration, in its strict biblical sense, extends to the English authorized version or any other translation of the Bible. We must evermore rejoice in the belief that the translators who gave us our beautiful and precious English version were greatly strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit ; but that they were in any sense infallible in the great work no one pretends to believe. If it is lawful to make such a supposition, we do not hesitate to say that were our Lord on earth to-day, in our country, He would quote from the authorized English translation

as He did in the days of his earthly ministry from the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament. And this we say in the face of the evident instances in which our translators were misled in their renderings, and possibly in not a few instances biassed in their work by theological opinions and ecclesiastical predilections. Besides, their work was more or less—less rather than more—defective through lack of the earliest and best authenticated manuscripts, which recent discoveries and riper scholarship have brought to light. So evident are these facts in connection with our present English version, that all Christendom has united in preparing a new translation, of which the New Testament portion has already appeared.

In affirming the inspiration of the Bible as a whole, we do not claim, that even the best and most ancient text is absolutely free from possible errors crept in unawares, and still lurking here and there, in historical record, holy experimental song, or sublime prophecy, or even in the recorded utterances of our Lord and his apostles. It is not surprising that trifling errors should have found their way into the sacred text during the centuries of its transcription and transmission from Moses' day till now. But it does not therefore follow, that the Book as such is not the inspired and authoritative Word of God. A little dust of the ages ingrained in a pictured face by one of the old masters does not render it any the less genuine. A flaw in one of the pillars of St. Paul's does not make it any less the great work of Sir Christopher Wren, whose mortal remains lie entombed within its crypt.

“He who has once gained a [broad] view of the Bible, as the development of a course of history, itself guided and inspired by Jehovah, will not be disconcerted by

the confused noise of the critics. His faith in the Word of God lies deeper than any difficulties and flaws upon the surface of the Bible. He will not be disturbed by seeing any theory of its [inspiration] or school-book infallibility broken to fragments under the repeated blows of modern investigation. The water of life will flow from the rock which the scholar strikes with his rod. He can wait without fear for a candid and thorough study of these sacred writings to determine, if possible, what parts are genuine, and what narratives, if any, are unhistorical. His belief in the Word of God, from generation to generation, does not depend upon the minor incidents of the biblical stories. It would not be destroyed or weakened, even though human tradition could be shown to have overgrown some parts of the sacred history—as the ivy creeping up the walls of the church does not loosen its ancient stones. . . . He is above the din of the critics' hammer, and he is not troubled henceforth by the small dust of biblical criticism. . . . The person who throws in our faces what we have just characterized as the small dust of biblical criticism, and asks us what has become of the Word of God, resembles the man who should toss a spade full of sand, scraped from the surface of the rock, into the air, and ask us, as we rub our eyes, what has become of the world. It is still beneath us as of old, though our eyes may be too full of dust to see where we stand. After all the work of the critics the Bible remains, the great, sublime, enduring work of the Eternal, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. If only, however, we are allowed to plant our feet quietly on the everlasting rock, and are not compelled by a mistaken zeal to keep every grain of sand, to hold fast to any tradition of men which may have accumulated upon the surface of revelation, and

which, possibly, the rising winds of controversy may drive away.” *

Let us not be misled, or even shaken in our minds, by the hypercritical cavils of men who say, Are you sure that *every word* of your Bible is true?—are you quite sure that there are no uninspired records between the covers? We need only keep to the proposition that the Bible as a whole book is an inspired volume, containing a true record of a long historical development through which the Word of God came to man—first, at sundry times and in divers manners, as God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and in these last days by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who was in the beginning with God and was God, the very brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. (Heb. i. 1—3; John i. 1—3), revealing Himself and his eternal purpose of grace toward a sinful world.

When speaking of the inspiration of Old Testament narrative or history, we do not mean that the actors in the history were inspired, only that the historians were guided by the Holy Spirit in recording the acts and events. In other words, the record is an inspired one—was not written as ordinary histories were written, on insufficient data, and more or less colored by the prejudices of the historians. The *record* of events and of the actions and speech of men, good and bad, as that record appears on the sacred pages of the Bible, was written under the superintendence of the Spirit of Truth, and is so far forth historically reliable.

We note the great variety of contents in the Biblical records. Moses has given us an account of the creation,

* Old Faiths in New Light.

brief and succinct ; designed not so much to show *how* the world, and man, and all that therein is, came into existence, as to show and declare God's authorship of them, and their relation to Him. Thus we have an account of the origin of the material universe and of the human species ; the appearance of sin and death ; of certain institutions, such as the Sabbath and marriage ; of the races and early nations. This early history is not necessarily a *scientific* account of the origin of things, not a philosophical theory of these things, but a revelation of the truth concerning them from God downward to us.

Then we have a record of the doings of certain men and the movement of the races ; a record of the wickedness of man ; of his destruction by the flood ; of the salvation of Noah and his family ; of the call of Abraham, and the rise of the Jewish race, and the formation of the nation ; of the political and religious history of the Jews ; of their relation to God and the nations around them ; of God's dealing with them, both in wrath and mercy. We have the recorded actions and speeches of both good and bad men ; a faithful history of God's chosen people ; of the virtues and vices of those whom He called his own. But let us remember that this record was not merely for the purpose of preserving or making historical mention, but to show God's connection with human history, and how all human actions stand in relation to Him ; not for the purpose of preserving human thought and speculations, but to declare the truth from God's standpoint.

Then we have a record of the Holy Law of God and of his eternal purpose of grace ; first dimly revealed in dark saying, as in the first promise of salvation spoken in the hearing of Adam, "I will put enmity between

thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ” (Gen. iii. 15) ; and then in types and shadows gradually unfolded and becoming more and more distinct—as interpreted by the institutions of permanent worship among the Hebrews, the experimental holy Song of David and others, and the magnificent prophetic utterances of the holy seers ; until He came in the fulness of time, born of a woman and made under the law (Gal. iv. 4), “ of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write ” (John i. 45 ; Luke xxiv. 27).

The inspired record of sin and sinful actions is no part of the moral teaching of the Bible. The Spirit of God may cause the lie of a man or the wickedness of a man to be faithfully recorded, as He has recorded the sins of his people as well as those of his enemies ; but it does not follow that, because the record is inspired, God approved or sanctioned the sins He caused to be recorded. We have been surprised to find not a few intelligent people perplexed on this point, supposing that the record of a man’s sin cannot be inspired, *because it is the record of sin* ; but it seems to us that a moment’s attentive thought will dissipate such a difficulty.

In this connection we may observe that there are many things in the Bible recorded by inspiration not intended to convey instruction as coming from God, except in an incidental and secondary sense, in which, indeed, “ all Scriptures given by inspiration are profitable.” For example, a large part of the Book of Job is made up of the human teachings and speculations of Job and his three friends ; but because their opinions and reasonings have been put on record by the Holy Spirit, we are not, therefore, to accept them as of divine authority. Again, it is written in the Bible, “ *There is no God* ” (Ps. liii.

1) ; but that is the record of what “ the fool hath said,” not of what God hath said. So, in reading the Bible, we must discriminate between what *God* says and what *man* says (of which a record, for wise reasons, has been preserved). The immoralities of bad and unsanctified men (the record of which is preserved in the Bible) must not be confounded with the moral teachings of God’s Word. Loose popular misapprehension on this point seems to justify me in saying so much.

Bear in mind, also, that the contents of the Bible are of relative importance. For example, no one can doubt for a moment that the third chapter of John’s Gospel, or the account of the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, is of infinitely more importance to us than the long list of genealogies recorded in the Chronicles ; yet it does not follow that the genealogies were written under an inspiration differing in kind or degree from that which guided John in writing his Gospel, any more than it follows that because a crawling worm is of less importance in the creation than the man made in the image of God, it is therefore any less the creature of God. “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* ” (2 Tim. iii. 16).

Let us remember the difference between *inspiration* and *revelation*. For example, historical facts are not revelation, strictly speaking. By revelation, we understand that discovery of things by means of the sacred Scriptures that we could not otherwise know, either through the testimony of the senses, or conscience, or mere reason. That sin is sinful is not a revelation, for man knows that without the Bible. His conscience tells him that. The revelation consists in the setting of sin and human actions in the light of the great white throne, thus letting us see them as God estimates and judges them.

On the other hand, there are many things that could only have been known by a direct revelation. We can only know what the mind of God is toward a sinful creature by a revelation of that mind. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord?” (Rom. xi. 34). In fact, to *know* God at all, we must have a revelation. “For who by searching can find out God?” (Job xi. 7). “No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him” (Matt. xi. 27). We can only know whether there be forgiveness with God by revelation (Ps. cxxx. 4; Exod. xxxiv. 7; Dan. ix. 9; 1 John i. 9). Only by revelation can we know the method of the divine grace (Rom. i. 17). Indeed, all the unseen and eternal things which most deeply concern us are matters of pure revelation (1 Cor. xi. 9, 10). But for the revelation which God has given us by His Son Jesus Christ, what could we know of heaven or hell, of the state of the dead, of life and immortality, or of any of the things that “must shortly come to pass”? (Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6). It is well to remember that the current and popular opinions held and advanced by men on all these great questions are modified imaginings, drawn from the revelation God has made in his word. Therefore, instead of listening to what man may say, or caring for what may be any man’s opinion, let us go direct to the Word of God and get knowledge that is able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. iii. 15).

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES.

Christ and the Scriptures inseparable—He is the culmination of Revelation—The Bible testifies of Christ—Christ endorses the Scriptures—Christ the Key with which to unlock the Bible.

CHRIST and the Scriptures are inseparable—Revelation culminates in Him. Without Him the Bible would be a meaningless book ; unintelligible in its history, in its types and ceremonials, and in its prophecy. “ Abraham rejoiced to see his day ; and he saw it and was glad ” (John viii. 56 ; Gen. xxii. 13, 14). Jacob looked down the ages, and saw in Him that “ Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the people should be ” (Gen. xlix. 10). Moses saw in Him the Prophet whom the Lord God would raise up like unto him from among his brethren, to whom they were to give ear (Deut. xviii. 15—18). David sang his praise in a score of psalms ; his crucified Lord in the twenty-second ; his Shepherd going with him through the valley of the shadow of death in the twenty-third ; his glorious risen and ascended King passing into the everlasting gates, in the twenty-fourth. Isaiah saw Him the Child born, the Son given, whose name was Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (ix. 6) ; the sure foundation-stone laid in Zion, tried and precious (xxviii. 16) ; and the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, bearing the chastisement of our peace, and

healing us with his stripes (liii. 5). Daniel saw Him "the stone cut out of the mountain," breaking in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, of Nebuchadnezzar's image ; and the Ancient of Days, like unto the Son of Man, taking and possessing the kingdoms of all the earth (Dan. ii. and vii.). Malachi beheld Him the Lord of the covenant coming as a Refiner and Fuller, purifying the sons of Levi and purging them as gold (Mal. iii.). In a word, He is the burden of all Scriptures, as He Himself saith : " All things concerning Me were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms" (Luke xxiv. 44). Indeed, should we lose the New Testament life of our Lord it would be possible to reconstruct it from the Old Testament Scriptures.

From the time when God announced in the Garden of Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15), until the time when John cried, in response to the apocalyptic vision, " Even so come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20), He is seen to be the great central fact and figure of the Book. As the sun casts a shadow before an advancing body, so Jesus, who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, " whose goings forth have been from everlasting" (Mic. v. 2), cast the long line of typical and ceremonial shadows before Him.

These things of the ceremonial law, says the Apostle, were " the shadow of good things to come." Adam, out of whose side and from whose substance a bride for him was taken and made, is but a type of Him out of whose wounded side and from whose divine nature, the redeemed Church, the Lamb's wife, is taken (Eph. v. 30—32). Abel, slain by Cain, tells us of the Good Shepherd slain for us, whose " blood speaketh better things

than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24). Enoch points to Him who hath ascended on high, giving the resurrection side, lacking in typical Abel; and Noah, that man of faith who prepared an ark for the condemnation and the salvation of the world, points to Him on account of whose righteousness we may enter in and be saved. The burning bush was a type of the incarnation, the eternal flame of Godhead dwelling in the bush of human nature, and not consuming it, out of which God announced his incarnate name—I AM. For in after-days do we not hear Him "who came down" and dwelt in human nature, filling up that mysterious name, saying, "I AM the light of the world; I AM the way; I AM the door; I AM the bread of life; I AM the good shepherd; I AM the true vine; I AM the resurrection and the life; I AM the bright and morning star; I AM the first and last; before Abraham was, I AM; I AM Jesus"? Surely all this is too plain to need argument or further proof.

The lamb of Egypt tells us of Christ, our true Pass-over, who is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. v. 7). Moses and Aaron point to the Apostle and High-priest of our profession (Heb. iii. 1). The falling manna in the wilderness was but the promise of that true bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die (John vi. 50); and the smitten rock in the wilderness, that gave drink to the children of Israel, was but the type of Him who in the fulness of time was smitten for us. "That Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 4).

But this point may be summed up in the Master's own words, when He says of the Scriptures, "they are they that testify of Me" (John v. 39). Toward Him all the lines of ancient history converge: from Him all lines of modern history and thought diverge. All the old Testa-

ment saints looked forward to Him, as did Abraham, who rejoiced to see his day, and was glad (John viii. 56). The New Testament saints, and all who have followed, look back to Him and his finished work, and also rejoice. In all the Word of God there is not a page that does not testify of Him.

Mr. Moody tells of a visit to Prang's chromo establishment in Boston. Mr. Prang showed him a stone, on which was laid the color for making the first impression toward producing the portrait of a distinguished public man : but he could see only the faintest possible line of tinting. The next stone that the paper was submitted to, deepened the color a little, but still no trace of the man's face was visible. Again and again was the sheet passed over successive stones, until at last the outlines of a man's face were dimly discerned. Finally, after some twenty impressions, from as many different stones, were taken upon the paper, the portrait of the distinguished man stood forth so perfectly that it seemed only to lack the power of speech to make it living.

Thus it is with Christ in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament. Many persons—even many who *know* Christ—read rapidly through and over the pages of the Book, and declare that they do not see Christ in them. Well, read it again and again ; look a little more intently upon those sacred pages ; draw a little nearer into the light which the Holy Spirit gives to them that ask Him ; read it on your knees, calling upon God to open your eyes that you may see wonderful things out of his law ; and presently the beauteous, glorious face of Him whom your soul loveth will shine forth upon you. Sometimes you will see that wondrous face in deep shadow, marred more than the face of any man ; and again He will seem fair as the lily of the valley,

and his face will shine above the brightness of the sun.

On the other hand Christ is the chief witness to the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures. Their words were constantly in his mouth ; and to them He constantly appealed, as having witnessed to Him (John i. 45, v. 39 ; Luke xxiv. 25—27, 44—47). He did not treat them as myths, but as veritable record of facts, persons, and events. All in them was real to Him, as He spoke of and appealed to them. It is not without interest that many of the events recorded in the Old Testament that are most commonly treated as mythical and utterly unimportant as matters of history are by Christ appealed to as historical facts. For instance, upon entering upon his public ministry He suffered Himself to be introduced as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (John i. 29). By this He endorsed that most remarkable portion of the book of Exodus relating to the slaying of the Paschal Lamb, the destruction of the first born, and the exodus of the Hebrews.

Many doubt the Mosaic account of the Deluge in the days of Noah : but not so Christ ; for we hear Him distinctly appealing to it to enforce the certainty of coming events. “As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be : for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away : so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. xxiv. 37—39). In like manner He bears testimony to the truth of the awful history of the destruction of Sodom—“Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot : they did eat, they drank, they bought,

they sold, they planted, they builded ; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke xvii. 28, 29).

Even so the salvation of the Israelites by means of the brazen serpent is unqualifiedly sanctioned : “ For,” says Christ, “ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (John iii. 14). And of the fall of the manna in the wilderness, by which the Israelites were miraculously fed for forty years, Christ says, “ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. . . . your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (John vi. 51, 58).

There are yet two other cases that many people think are quite too absurd to believe, and must at all hazards be given up, both of which our Lord has especially endorsed. One, the case of Lot’s wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, as she looked back upon Sodom ; the other, the case of Jonah who was swallowed by the great fish. In the one case He points a thrilling exhortation with “ Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke xvii. 32) : in the other, He answered the Scribes and Pharisees who desired to see a sign from Him—“ An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas ; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. xii. 38—40).

We are forced to the conclusion that our Lord believed these things to have actually occurred ; and before we can disbelieve them in any particular, we must discredit the testimony of Jesus Himself. Let us not then be

moved by what the critics say about the incredible and absurd myths of the Bible. Our Lord endorsed so many of them in the course of his public life, that we should have no difficulty in believing the rest.

We may fairly conclude from the above that Jesus is at once the key to the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the guarantor of their truthfulness. We have no hesitancy in accepting the words which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke. We have seen how He by many words and expressions endorsed the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and made them his own : so we take the Bible in its entirety with the same assurance that it is the Word of God, as if Jesus Christ Himself had written every word of it, instead of Moses, David, Isaiah, Ezra, Daniel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, and James. It is all God's Word to us ; and we receive and interpret it, not on the authority of any theory, but simply as the Word of God.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT THE BIBLE CONTAINS FOR THE BELIEVER.

The words of life and salvation—"Quick and powerful"—To be received by faith—Its doctrines and promises to be experienced as well as believed—The only authority in matters of faith and practice—The absolute guarantee of our heavenly inheritance—The means of our spiritual culture—The Christian's armory, containing all needed weapons, both for offence and defence—A perfect guide to the Christian on pilgrimage through the world—The revelation of things to come.

I.

The Bible the only Book that can make us wise unto Salvation.

THE Bible is not a book to be studied as we study geology and astronomy, merely to find out about the earth's formation and the structure of the universe ; but it is a book revealing truth, designed to bring us into *living union* with God. We may study the physical sciences and get a fair knowledge of the facts and phenomena of the *material* universe ; but what difference does it make to us, as *spiritual* beings, whether the Copernican theory of the universe is true, or that of Ptolemy ? On the other hand, the eternal things of God's Word do so concern us. Scientific knowledge, and the words in which that knowledge is conveyed, have no power to change our characters, to make us better, or give us a living hope of a blessed immortality ; but the Word of God has in it a vital power,—it is

“quick and powerful,”—living, and full of divine energy (Heb. iv. 12), and when received with meekness into our understanding and heart, is able to save our souls (James i. 18—21), for it is the instrument of the Holy Spirit wherewith He accomplishes in us regeneration of character.

The Word of God is a living seed, containing within itself God’s own life, which, when it is received into our hearts, springs up within us and “brings forth fruit after its kind ;” for Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, is the living germ hidden in his written word. Therefore it is written, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John vi. 63) ; and so it is that “he that heareth my words,” that is, receiveth them into an honest and good heart—heareth the word, and understandeth it—puts himself into personal relation to it—“*hath everlasting life*” (Matt. xiii. 23 ; John v. 24). Of no other book could such things as these be said. Hence we say the Word of God is the instrument in his hand to work in us and for us regeneration and salvation : for “of his own will begat He us with the word of truth . . . the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James i. 18, 21).

This leads us to say that we are related to God and the eternal verities revealed in this Book, not through intellectual apprehension and demonstration, but by *faith*. Not by reasoning, but by simple faith, do we lay hold on these verities, resting our faith on God, who is under and in every saving fact in the Book (1 Pet. i. 21). It seems to me, therefore, supreme folly for men to be always speculating and reasoning about these spiritual and revealed things ; and yet we constantly meet even good people who are thus dealing with God’s Word. First of all, they treat the revelation as though it were only an

opinion expressed concerning the things revealed ; and so they feel free to dissent from it, or to receive it with modification, and to deal with it as they would with the generalizations and conclusions, more or less accurate, of the scientists, and the theories, more or less true, of the philosophers. If the Word commends itself to their judgment they accept it ; thus making *their judgment* the criterion of truth, instead of submitting their opinions to the infallible Word of God. And it is not seldom that we hear people say they believe the Word of God to be true ; and then the very next instant, when pressed by some statement or declaration of that Word, they fly off and say, “ Ah ! but then *I* believe so and so,”—something entirely different from what God has declared. Then again, many people who profess to believe God’s Word seem never to think of putting themselves into practical and saving relation to it. They believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world ; but they never believe ON Him or IN Him ; in other words, that He is a Saviour to *them*.

God’s Book is full of doctrines and promises. We declare them ; and some one says, “ You must prove this doctrine or that promise to be true.” The only way to prove a doctrine to be true is by a personal experience of it through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ says, “ YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.” Should you attempt to master the meaning and power of that doctrine by mere speculation, you would presently land just where Nicodemus did, and say, “ How can these things be ?” Instead of doing so, suppose you attend further to what is said, namely, “ Whosoever believeth is born of God ” (1 John v. 1 ; John i. 12, 13). In obedience to this divine teaching, not knowing how it is to be done in us, we take that word and yield ourselves to Jesus Christ ; and lo ! there dawns

upon us an experience that throws light upon all that which before was a mystery. We have experienced *no physical shock* ; but a great change is wrought in us, especially in our relation to God. "Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

Thus we come into an experimental understanding of the doctrine of the new birth. So every other doctrine pertaining to the spiritual life is by God's grace transmuted into experience. For just as a word stands for an idea or thought, so the doctrines of God stand for experiences ; but the doctrine must be received before the experience can be had. And, moreover, we are to receive all doctrines, all truth, through faith in Him ; for Christ and his word are inseparable, just as a man's *note* is only current and worthful because the *man* is good. A bank-note is received in the faith of the *bank* it represents. Should the bank fail, the notes instantly become worthless.

But there are some things revealed in the Word of God which we believe without experience. For instance, we believe that this "vile body" (Phil. iii. 21), dishonored by sin, and upon the neck of which Death will soon put his foot, will in the day of Christ's "appearing and kingdom" (2 Tim iv. 1 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16) be raised, changed, and fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. iii. 21). Do you know how we can so surely believe these things ? We answer, because God has proved to us so much of his word that when He announces something *yet to be made true*, we, on the basis of past experience, reach out toward and accept as true the promise of the future things. Indeed, He already makes it true in our hearts, for "faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1). For even here we have a

present spiritual experience which is as an earnest to us of the culmination yet future. For we are already risen with Christ (Col. ii. 13 ; iii. 1 ; Eph. ii. 5, 6 ; Rom. viii. 11).

II.

The Word of God the only Authority in Matters of Faith and Practice binding upon the Conscience.

No man, no set of men, no church or ecclesiastical organization, has a right to impose upon us tests, or tenets other than those clearly written and expressed in the Scriptures. “IT IS WRITTEN,” should preface every word of authority spoken, and every article of faith propounded. We would not say that “creeds” drawn up by men and adopted by churches are in themselves bad ; on the other hand, we think they serve a very useful purpose. But undoubtedly a very bad use has been made of creeds. Creeds are at the best *human* formulations of truths already ascertained ; but no one of the many excellent creeds in use by the Church, unless we except the so-called Apostles’ Creed, is without its serious defects, either on account of overstatement or understatement. They may be useful in guiding us somewhat into the examination and study of the Scriptures, by furnishing us with the maturest thought and research of the pious and learned men of the Church in all ages ; but they must in no case be foisted upon the conscience as of binding authority. Should a man or a church tell us that we must believe this creed or that doctrine expressed in human and uninspired language, as a condition of salvation or standing before God and in his Church, or impose upon us ordinances other than those clearly instituted by Jesus Christ, we ought to say to them, “Away with your creeds ; and away with your ordinances ! ‘To the

law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them ' ' (Isa. viii. 20).

Undoubtedly the organized Church of God has a right to guard itself against heresies and false doctrine. In the midst of so many false doctrines and false teachers, it may be necessary for the Church to publish a summary of her faith and practice ; but that confession must not be exalted into the place of God's Word. The Church at the time of Christ's ministry on the earth had well-nigh lost sight of the Scriptures by the accumulation of creeds, glosses, commentaries, and the like (Matt. xv. 2, 3, 6 ; Col. ii. 8), so that they were more given to creeds and traditions and doctrines of men than they were to the Word of God. We are in the same danger now. If we give ourselves to daily searchings of the Scriptures, as did the noble Bereans (Acts xvii. 11), we shall be in little danger of falling into error.

It is a woful evil to substitute the *authority* of "creeds" and "confessions of faith" for that of the Word of God, which is the only rule of faith and practice for his people, and the only writing that is of binding authority upon the conscience. I was once told by a man that to yield absolute allegiance to the Scripture, giving up all right of dissent from any of its teachings, was to degrade oneself into the condition of intellectual and spiritual slavery. Indeed, with a tone of pity and contempt, he said : "Poor slave !" "No, no !" I replied, "you are the slave ; I am the freeman, a glorious freeman—made free by the truth" (John viii. 32). It is the *truth* that makes us free, delivering us from the thralldom of opinion and speculation. Whenever any one yields obedience to the creeds of men or of churches, and surrenders the God-given right of personally search-

ing the Scriptures to find out for himself the truth, then he indeed becomes a slave. Pay attention, if you will, reverently, to what the piety and learning of the Church have said in all the ages ; but never surrender your conscience to any save God, and that on the sole authority of *his Word*.

III.

The Bible contains in itself the absolute Guarantee of our Inheritance in Christ.

Suppose I should come to you some day and call in question your ownership of your house, and demand that you give it up—a homestead bequeathed to you by your father. “ Why do you make such a demand upon me ?” you ask. “ Because,” I reply, “ it is not your house ; you have no right to it ; at least you do not know that it is yours.” “ Oh, yes !” you reply ; “ I am quite sure it is my house.” “ How do you know ? what is your reason for believing that it is your house ?” “ Why, because my father lived here before me.” “ That is no good reason.” “ Well, I have lived here undisturbed for five years myself.” “ It does not hence follow that the house is yours.” “ But I am very happy in it : I enjoy myself here.” “ Well but, my dear sir, that you may do, and still have no right to it.” At last, pushed to the wall, you take me with you down the court-house, and show me your father’s will, duly written, signed, sealed, and recorded. This may serve to illustrate the point. A great many Christians are at a loss where and how to ground their “ title.” It is not in the fact that you are a descendant of a saintly family, a child of believing parents ; for, as old Matthew Henry says : “ Grace does not run in the blood ;” nor is it that you have membership in the visible Church of Christ ;

nor is it to be found in delightful frames and feelings—in a word, not even a genuine Christian experience constitutes your “title-deed.”

Where then are we to lay the foundation of our hope? Why, just in the naked, bare Word of God. It is written, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life,” etc. (John v. 24). Straight to the record do we appeal for a final test as to our possession in God. “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John v. 11, 12). Our faith lays hold on the Son of God, in whom we have redemption (Eph. i. 7), by means of and through the recorded word of promise; for this record was “*written* that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name” (John xx. 31). The Scriptures are the covenants, old and new, in which God has guaranteed to us, by word and oath (Heb. vi. 17, 18), sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ (Matt. xxvi. 28), an inheritance among the saints. I do not emphasize this point in any wise to underrate Christian experience (for it is most blessed and true), or undervalue the blessing of believing parents, or the Church and her ordinances, but only to draw your attention to “the more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet. i. 19), which is better to us for confirmation than visions and voices, frames and feelings, parental benedictions, Church absolutions, and sacraments.

IV.

The Word of God is the Means appointed for the Culture of our Christian Life.

James tells us (i. 18) that the word of truth is the instrument of our regeneration, and Jesus tells us that the truth not only “makes us free,” but prays the Father that we may be “sanctified through the truth” (John viii. 32—36 ; xvii. 17—19). And Paul tells us, in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, that “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might *sanctify* and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the word*,” etc. (Eph. v. 25, 27). “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. iv. 3) ; for “God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thess. iv. 7).

After regeneration, nothing can be more important than this. We are told in the Bible—and we believe it—that by and by we shall be in another state of existence—in heaven—in the presence of the loving and glorified Jesus ; that we shall see his face, and his name shall be on our foreheads (Rev. xxii. 4) ; that we shall be with the angels, an innumerable company, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, the saints of all ages (Heb. xii. 22, 23) ; that we shall know them and be in their society (Matt. xvii. 3 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 12) ; that we shall be absolutely untainted with sin, as glorious as the uncreated light of God (Rev. xxi. 4, 27 ; Matt. xiii. 43). This being the place and the company toward which we are being borne along so rapidly, we want to be prepared for both place and society.

Ah, friends ! you are anxious to be cultured for this world and its “best society,” in its knowledge, in its customs, and in its manners. Yes, you lavish time and

money upon yourself and your children, in order that they may be furnished with the accomplishments and culture of this world. You say that when you appear in good society you want to be at ease, to be a peer among the most accomplished, and that you wish the same for your children. Were you invited to go six months hence to take up your abode at the Court of St. James's, as the guest of England's noble queen, you would ransack all the books at your command that treated of court etiquette and manners ; you would brush up in English history, so that you might not be taken unawares either in your knowledge of the affairs of the country, or in court ceremonial. But in a little while we are going to the court of the King immortal, eternal, in the kingdom of glory. We know not the day nor the hour when the Lord will come, or when He will call us hence ; and we want to be ready, both as to purity of character and the courtly culture of the heavenly city. We wish to be familiar with the history of redemption, and with the mysteries of the kingdom. We do not want to appear as awkward strangers in our Father's house of light. We can only get this sanctification of character, and culture of life and manner, by constant familiarity and communion with God and the saints, through the Word.

You are anxious that yourself, or, it may be, that your children, should appear well in the society of this world. To this end you devote yourself and them to the schools of the world and fashion ; the dancing-school and the academy, you fancy, are the only places where polite manners and courtly grace may be acquired. I too am anxious that my child, just now approaching the threshold of womanhood, should be a cultured and accomplished lady, in every way worthy of being the

King's daughter, as by grace she is. But I should not think of seeking for her the *entrée* of what is called in this world the “best society,” or of sending her to a fashionable finishing-school and dancing-academy, in order to such end. If she have her heart filled with the dear, great love of God, and the sweet grace of Christ ; if she hang on the chamber-walls of her soul as pictures, “whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, and *think* on these things” (Phil. iv. 8) ; if she journey through this world in companionship with Christ ; if the Holy Spirit guide her through the Word, as Bunyan's pilgrim was led through the “House of the Interpreter,” and show her wonderful and beautiful things out of God's law ; if the fruit of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. v. 22, 23), adorn her life and character,—I am not afraid that, in culture of mind and heart, or in grace of manner, she will be a whit behind the foremost lady in the land. Ah ! there is a heavenly culture and a divine grace of manner that far transcend anything found in the schools of this world. Only a Christian could think of saying with Paul, standing before his judge, “*except these bonds*” (Acts xxvi. 29).

John Bunyan, locked up for twelve years in Bedford jail, with his Bible and concordance for his constant and almost only companions, produced and sent forth to the world his immortal dream, written with such beauty of style and in such chaste and simple manner, as to make it classic in English literature. So perfect and matchless were the intellectual and spiritual culture of this unlearned “tinker of Elstow,” that the scholarly John Owen testified before the king : “Your Majesty, if I could write as does that tinker in Bedford jail, I

would gladly lay down all my learning." Where did John Bunyan get his culture? In glorious fellowship with Moses in the law; with David in the Psalms; with Isaiah and the prophets and holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; with Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; with Paul, Peter, and all the rest who wrote and spoke, not their own thoughts, nor in words of man's wisdom, but God's thoughts, and in words which the Holy Ghost giveth. Read Homer and Milton, Shakespeare and Dante; read Bacon, Macaulay, Addison, and Carlyle; go through the best literature of every age; and all will fall infinitely short of the purity, beauty, and grandeur of thought and expression found in God's Word.

Goethe, who said he was "not Christian," has declared of the canonical Gospels: "The human mind, no matter how much it may advance in intellectual culture, and in the extent and depth of the knowledge of nature, will never transcend the high moral culture of Christianity as it shines and glows in the canonical Gospels." Renan, the French infidel author, concludes his life of Jesus with these remarkable words: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed; his worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his suffering will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus." And Strauss, the rationalistic German author of the *Life of Jesus*, says: "Jesus presents within the sphere of religion the culminating point, beyond which posterity can never go—yea, which it cannot even equal. . . . He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought; and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart." Thus the power of the

“Book and the Person” for the highest culture of the highest nature of man, is affirmed by the great apostle of modern culture, and by those who do not admit the divine origin of the Scriptures, or the deity of Him of whom they are from first to last the witness. If, then, you want to know how to serve God and do his will on the earth, and be thoroughly prepared and cultured for heaven hereafter, take his Word, and make it the rule and companion of your life.

V.

The Bible is the Christian's Armory.

The Christian's calling in the world is that of a soldier. He must fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. vi. 12 ; 2 Tim. iv. 7). Sinners are to be won from the power of the devil to God. Their intelligence, their wills, and their affections, are to be stormed and carried for Him ; they are to be turned from the power of darkness to light ; their prison-houses of sin are to be broken into ; their chains knocked off ; and the captives set free (Acts xxvi. 16—18 ; Luke iv. 18). We also, in our own Christian life and pilgrimage, are set upon by the powers of darkness ; by the fiery darts of the devil. Doubts ; infidelity ; temptations ; evil imaginations ; unclean, unholy, and vain thoughts—assail us, poured in upon our souls by Satan ; the lusts of the flesh being thus set on fire of hell, if by this means the child of God may be overtaken in a fault or overcome by sin.

But this warfare is not carnal, or after the manner of the flesh. “ For though we walk in the flesh [have our lives as other men do, in fleshly bodies], we do not war after the flesh ; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of

strongholds, casting down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing [lofty edifice] that is exalted against the knowledge of God ; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ” (2 Cor. x. 3—5). Just as Joshua went up against Jericho, and took its strongholds and high towers, and cast them down and made captive the city, not with carnal weapons, but with trumpets of rams’ horns (Josh. vi.), so we, proceeding against the strongholds, imaginations, and infidel arguments of men, are to take the gospel trump. The sword we are to wield is the “ Word of God, the sword of the Spirit ” (Eph. vi. 17), that Christian’s “ Excalibur ” which makes him who wields it invincible.

The Bible itself must be brought out, not only as the best defence against all the assaults of infidelity from the lofty towers of human reasonings, but also as the mighty weapon to overcome and bring the enemies of God into captivity to Christ. “ They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony ” (Rev. xii. 11). “ Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God ; having your loins girt about with truth ; and having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; and above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked ; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God* ” (Eph. vi. 13—17). In order that we may be furnished with the secret of successful warfare for Jesus, we have only to recall how He overcame the devil with the all-prevailing weapon, “ It is written.”

Very often Christians, young and old, come to me in the “ inquiry room,” and say, “ Won’t you come and talk with this friend of mine ? ” “ Why don’t you talk

with him yourself?” The reply usually is : “ Because I don’t know what to say to him ; and, besides, you know more of the Bible.” “ Well, why don’t *you* know more of the Bible?” To this, various answers are given. At any rate we meet here one grave mistake : This ignorance of the Bible, which not only supplies us with our spiritual weapons, but “ thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works” (2 Tim. iii. 17), leads many earnest Christians to the doubtful use of their own argumentation in dealing with their own and others’ souls. It is a hopeless task to pull down the strongholds of the unregenerated mind and heart with anything less than divine weapons. But all may equip themselves from this great armory. The Bible contains ideas which no philosophy or human theory can furnish, and therefore puts us in possession of weapons which the enemy cannot withstand when hard pushed by them, reinforced as they are by the invisible and mighty presence of the Holy Spirit, thus rendering us impregnable to the assaults of the adversary.

Of this mighty power of the Word and Spirit of God we have a splendid example in the case of Stephen, and other early disciples, whose words, drawn from the Scripture, the Jews could not withstand. I have never yet met an infidel or atheist whose arguments could not be turned aside by one depending simply on the Word of God. Nay, more ; I have never yet met one in the “ inquiry room” who has been able to withstand God’s Word and the mighty facts of the Bible, when, in humble dependence upon God, I have set them in array before him. If you know God’s thoughts, and seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit, He will, at the right time, utter out of your mouth the right word, both to ward off an assault and to strike a telling blow for the truth. And amidst

all this warfare, the light and love and gentleness of Jesus Christ will so shine out in your bearing and manner that men will be convinced of your sincerity, and God will give you the victory.

VI.

The Bible is a perfect Map and Chart to the Christian on Pilgrimage through the World.

With God's Word in hand and heart you may thread your way with perfect safety and confidence through all the labyrinths of this world. The strait and narrow way is so clearly and sharply marked that he who runs may read. It is a highway (unseen, it may be, by the worldling) in which a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err (Isa. xxxv. 8), for it is everywhere marked by God's commandments. More than that, we have an unseen guide, even the Spirit of Truth, who leads us, and who says to us, in places of doubt or uncertainty, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. xxx. 21). Thus, a pilgrim and a stranger, you may keep your onward way to the city of God in safety and confidence, following the light of the word, which is "a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path" (Psa. cxix. 105), the path that no one knoweth save He that leadeth thee. Yea, and you will find that the way, over hills and through valleys, shines more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. iv. 18).

The Word of God is a chart that marks all the rocks and reefs in the sea of life ; if we heed, and sail our frail bark by it, we shall come safely into the haven of rest at last. But if we are heedless and proud, and self-sufficient in our own conceits, we shall make shipwreck of our faith. A young lieutenant in the English navy dis-

covered a small but dangerous rock in the Mediterranean, never before known, and reported it to the Admiralty. The discovery was telegraphed to all the stations, and the position of the rock ordered to be noted down on all the charts. The first ship to sail over the spot was under command of an old captain, who, noting the warning newly placed on his chart, desired to know by whom the rock was reported. On being informed he replied : “ There is no such rock there. I have sailed over this sea for twenty years ; and if such a rock had been there I should have found it.” And then in his pride and conceit he gave orders to his sailing-master to steer directly over the spot indicated. The gallant ship was driven over the danger spot under full sail. There was a tremendous crash, and the noble vessel went down with all hands. Many a Christian makes shipwreck through unheeding conceit, or through neglect of his infallible chart. May the Holy Spirit incline us to study diligently our divine chart, and sail closely by it !

VII.

The Bible reveals Things to come.

It contains not only the history of the past, of God’s dealings with nations, but it also contains much unfulfilled prophecy. The Revelation is a book devoted to things that “ must shortly come to pass.” Prophecy has been called un-acted history ; and history is but fulfilled prophecy. It is a mistake to suppose that God’s hand in history has been limited to those nations mentioned in the Bible. Could we have the story of God in history, it would be seen that his providence has been in and over all the great and small events of all nations. Daniel in his great prophecy has given a rapid and

graphic sketch of the course of history from the golden-headed Babylonian empire down to the end of time, when the "Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven, . . . when there shall be given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all nations and languages should serve Him." When He comes, his dominion will be an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one which shall not be destroyed (Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 13—27). Meantime among nations God will be "overturning, and overturning, and overturning, until He comes whose right it is" (Ezek. xxi. 27). The Book of Revelation is a detailed exposition of the second and seventh chapters of Daniel ; and the two books should be read together.

Emperors, and kings, and cabinets, are rapidly bringing to pass things that God has marked out in prophecy ages ago. But they know not what they do. There are "signs in the heavens," and on the earth there is "distress of nations with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory" (Luke xxi. 25—27). Of the day and hour when the flaming heavens shall reveal the "appearing and kingdom" of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. iv. 1) no man knoweth ; but we are bidden to wait and be ready, lest we be surprised by the great and notable day of the Lord.

To this end the Scriptures are also written, that the loving student of them may live *in advance of history*, and be overtaken by no untoward event. If God's prophetic word dwell richly in our hearts and minds, there will be no great surprise for us as time goes on. We

shall discern through the prophetic telescope—dimly, it may be—the approaches of those things out of which history is made. Should it be our blessed lot to be “alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 17), we shall see the sign of Him in heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30), before the startled and amazed world, lying in sin and mocking unbelief (2 Pet. iii. 3 ; Luke xviii. 8), is overwhelmed in that “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. i. 7—9).

We know that there is a growing disposition on the part of many excellent Christians to make light (they know not what they do !) of all prophetic study ; but our risen Lord, in his last revelation to John concerning things to come, caused him to write at the very outset, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this *prophecy* ; and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand ;” and at the close of the book to add : “These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly : *blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*” (Rev. xxii. 6, 7).

Some careless servant or foolish virgin may say : “These are great mysteries : we cannot understand them ; therefore, we had better not ‘dabble’ in them.” To this let me make answer : We are *commanded* to read them, and a special blessing is promised to the diligent student of these mysteries. Moreover, He hath said, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God” (Mark iv. 11 ; Eph. i. 9). God’s Word is a secret, or mystery, to them that know Him not ; but it is an *open* secret to them that fear Him, and

seek unto his law. For “the *secret* of the Lord is with them that *fear* Him ; and He will show them his covenant ” (Psa. xxv. 14). May the Spirit of God give us a mind to study his word reverently and believingly, with a prepared heart, as did Ezra (vii. 10), in the light and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then will He “show us things to come” (John xvi. 13).

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Divisions and books of the Old and New Testament—Caution against neglecting to observe the relation of the Old to the New Testament—Reasons why the former should be carefully read—No thorough understanding of the New Testament without careful study of the Old—The book of Jesus and of the Apostles and the early Disciples.

THE Old Testament is divided historically into six great epochs : from the creation to the call of Abraham ; from Abraham to Moses ; from Moses to the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua ; from Joshua to David, or the period of the Judges ; from David to the captivity ; from the captivity to the coming of Christ, including the partial restoration and reformation under Ezra and Nehemiah. It has three general divisions recognized by Christ : “ The Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.” All parts of the Book testify of Him (Luke xxiv. 44). In detail we note the five books of Moses : Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, or, as they are commonly called, the Pentateuch. Then come the historical books, Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2d Samuel, the books of the Kings and the Chronicles : then Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon ; nor must we forget the two interesting books called Ruth and Esther : then the Prophets, major and minor. Jesus speaks of the Old Testament inclusively as the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.

We should be cautioned against the too common neglect of the Old Testament. There has been for some years past a growing tendency among many really good Christians, to regard the Old Testament as being in some sense an *effete* book, with which the Christian has nothing to do, unless, indeed, it be with a few of the Psalms, which may be used as companions for hours of devotion. Genesis has been by many handed over to the scientists; the other historical books to the ethnologists and archæologists; Leviticus to the Jews; the Prophets to the Second Adventists. Indeed, it was but a few months ago that a somewhat distinguished New England clergyman said at a public gathering of Sunday-school teachers, in substance, "The Old Testament is out of date; give me a few of the Psalms and a chapter or two out of Isaiah, and I have no further use for it."

We do not mean to say that for the more common and habitual use of the Christian the Old Testament is as important as the New; but we do mean to say that no Christian can afford to ignore or even lightly treat the Old Testament. The Bible is *one book*, and though one part may be relatively of more importance than another, yet every part ought to be familiar to the Christian, that each part in its season may minister to his help, culture, and sanctification. Indeed, the more earnest Bible students among us are daily awakening to the very great importance of that portion of God's Word, in order to a clearer and better understanding of the New Testament. It was St. Augustine who said, many centuries ago, "The New Testament is *enfolded* in the Old; and the Old Testament is *unfolded* in the New. For, what is the law but the Gospel foreshadowed? and what is the Gospel but the law fulfilled?"

The following are some of the many reasons why the

Old Testament Scriptures should be carefully and lovingly studied by every Christian :

1. It is the warp into which the New Testament Scriptures are woven. A little thought will suggest to you the very close friendship between the Old and New Testaments. There are in the New Testament nearly *one thousand* direct quotations from, and palpable allusions to, the Old Testament Scriptures ; and every book in the Old Testament (unless it be the Book of Esther) is quoted from, or alluded to, by the writers of the New Testament. To give a better idea of the prominence of the Old Testament thought in the New, I will present a little table showing the number of times (proximately) the Old Testament is quoted from, or palpably alluded to, in the New Testament books.

Matthew,	96 times	Colossians,	3 times
Mark,	34 “	1 Thess.,	2 “
Luke,	58 “	2 Thess.,	2 “
John,	40 “	1 Timothy,	6 “
Acts,	57 “	2 Timothy,	2 “
Romans,	74 “	Hebrews,	86 “
1 Corinthians,	41 “	James,	16 “
2 Corinthians,	13 “	1 Peter,	20 “
Galatians,	16 “	2 Peter,	10 “
Ephesians,	11 “	1 John,	6 “
Philippians,	3 “	Revelation,	249 “

This fact alone ought to fasten our attention on the Old Testament, and set us to searching it. Indeed, we think it fair to say that there can be no kind of thorough understanding of the Gospels and Epistles, to say nothing of the Acts and Revelation, without some degree of familiarity with the Old Testament.

The Old Testament becomes, on this account, the best of all dictionaries to open the New. Let us take one or three examples. What could we know of the signifi-

cance of John the Baptist's saying on the occasion of his introduction of Jesus at the time of His baptism: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), if we did not know the history and profound significance of the lamb that was slain on that dreadful night in Egypt (Ex. xii.), when its intervening blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of the Hebrew cottages saved them from the stroke of the destroying angel? Or how should we understand what our Lord meant when He said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John iii. 14), if we were not acquainted with the story of the brazen serpent in Numbers xxi. Or how should we know what was meant by being "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13), or the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition" (v. 14), if we were not familiar with the law of the offerings, and the structure of the Temple. Indeed, the entire doctrine of salvation by atonement would be unintelligible to us but for the Old Testament groundwork.

But not only is it thus a necessary dictionary, it is also a pictorial illustration of the New Testament. Take only the Book of Exodus, and we see a picture of human sin and bondage in the slavery of the Hebrew race in Egypt. In Egypt we see the pleasure-loving, lascivious world. In the Burning Bush we have a picture of God-head coming down and dwelling in human nature. In Moses and Aaron we see the Apostle and High-priest of redemption (Heb. iii. 1); in the Paschal Lamb we see Christ our Passover slain for us (1 Cor. v. 7); in the passage of the Red Sea we have a picture of our separation from the world and our consecration to God in baptism. The Book of Numbers gives us the wilderness

wandering ; Leviticus, the picture of the way of the sinner back to God by means of a high priest and blood ; Joshua, our entrance by faith into the Canaan of God, and faith's victories. So in the Old Testament characters we have helpful pictures of Christian life. In Abraham we find *faith* pictured ; In Isaac we see *sonship* ; in Jacob, the *pilgrim* ; in Joseph, the *sufferer* for Christ finally glorified. In Lot we see the worldly Christian, in strong contrast with the patriarch who made God his portion, and would not be enriched by the king of Sodom.

All these are most interesting and striking pictures of grace, in the method and development of God's plan, to those who have an eye to see and a heart to take in the things that God has revealed to us by his Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). When Israel was a child, God called him out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1) ; and being a child, God taught his son pictorially as we now teach our children. It is profitable for us to study the mature and completed revelation in the light and by the help of these early pictures. You would find geometry, chemistry, geology, or astronomy, and indeed any science, hard to master out of books if they were not profusely illustrated, so that the eye as well as the mere understanding can take in facts. We pity the student of God's Word who has grown too old or too wise to be interested in the pictures of salvation God has given us in his Word.

Our interest in the Old Testament must be greatly quickened when we remember that it was the book out of which Jesus, when yet a little child, was taught by his mother. Doubtless in his youth and early manhood the sacred parchments were, during his intermissions from labor at his trade of carpenter, rarely out of his hands. He was not a student at the college of the

Prophets, or at the rabbinical schools at Jerusalem ; but God's Word, the wonderful writings of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms that spake of Him, were the sources whence he drank in his deep knowledge. "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matt. xiii. 54) and "How knoweth this man letters (learning and doctrines of God), having never learned?"—at college or in the theological seminary (John vii. 15).

These were puzzling questions to the questioners, but the answer is simple : Jesus was a close, careful, and life-long student of the Old Testament. From this divine armory He drew his weapons with which to parry the subtle and deadly attacks of Satan. "It is written ;" "it is written ;" "it is written." And again and again he uplifted the shield of faith ; drew the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, from the sacred Scriptures ; foiled the thrust ; and gave the enemy blow for blow, sending him staggering backward defeated (Matt. iv. 3—11). After his resurrection Jesus gathered his disciples together and reproved them for their want of understanding of the Scriptures : "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. And said unto them : Thus it is written ; and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke xxiv. 25—27, 46).

What a careful, patient and loving student of the Old Testament must our Lord have been ! This alone ought to make us love it and study it. I have an old book in my library, a copy of the first English edition of *Calvin's Institutes*. It has been handed down from father to son

through generations ; has been handled and read and studied by some of the devoutest and ablest old Puritan Fathers—until it finally fell into my hands. I love to take up that book sometimes, and read out of its pages the sturdy teachings of the Geneva Reformer, because so many good and holy men have used it before me. With how much more delight should we love to think, as we read and study Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, that the eye and the heart of the loving Lord Himself has pored over these same chapters and words ; that He has studied the significance of these wonderful histories, and types, and characters ; for He used often to speak of them all—of Moses, of David, of Solomon, of Abraham, of Lot, of Jonah, of Noah, and the others ! But especially is it delightful when, in the study of them all, Jesus Himself is seen in the Book. His presence in the Old Testament Scriptures is constantly seen and felt ; and the heart burns again as He talks with us by the way out of Moses and the Prophets.

Again, these same ancient Scriptures were the only books of the apostles. From them Peter drew his searching sermons ; Stephen framed his magnificent defence ; Paul pleaded his case before his brethren the Jews, and the Roman governors ; Philip preached Jesus both to the Samaritans and to the eunuch. The great apostle framed his epistles to the churches upon the Old Testament Scriptures ; and with the parchments in his hands, whilst in his prison-house at Rome, to the people who came to him on appointed days he “expounded” them, “and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, *both out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets*, from morning till evening” (Acts xxviii. 23).

Neither had the early disciples any Bible but the Old

Testament ; for it was not until many years after the gathering of the first churches that even portions of what we now call the New Testament began to be circulated ; and it was many years after the Gospels and Epistles were written before they were gathered together and formally incorporated into the sacred canon.

For all these and many other reasons which neither time nor space will suffice to give, the careful, frequent, and loving study of the Old Testament Scriptures is urged. It is a sad thing that, in these days, these old mines of truth are so generally neglected, for they are as rich to-day as ever ; nay, more rich are they, for we can work them in the better and clearer light afforded by the New Testament.

CHAPTER VIII.

STUDY OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOOKS.

Importance of getting clear idea of the central truth or main line of teaching in each book of the Bible—Illustrations given from the Book of Genesis—(1) The beginnings—(2) The courses of human nature from its source in Adam—(3) Man in nature and grace—In the lines of Cain and Abel-Seth—(4) Types in Genesis—Hints for the further pursuit of this kind of study.

It is well, and indispensable to the most profitable study of the Bible, *to get a clear idea of the central truth or main line of teaching contained in each of the books of the Bible.* For it is certain that every book has its peculiar teaching, and its relation to each of the other books. There is a wonderful system underlying the progressive development of revelation and doctrine throughout the whole Bible. I will venture to suggest what I mean, by way of brief example or illustration from the Book of Genesis, merely for the purpose of giving you the clue to further personal inquiry and study.

Note first, that there are various lines of teachings in each book. For instance, in Genesis, we have historical, dispensational, and typical truth, beside many incidental but no less significant lines. The same is true of the other books of Moses, and especially of all the earlier historical books of the Bible; for God's revelation is seen in history, as well as in the direct "Thus saith the Lord."

Indeed, the whole history of creation—of the race and its development, in connection with its institutions and

relations—is but a great series of parables. Says Archbishop Trench : “The entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a *help at once to our faith and our understanding*.

. . . The world of nature being throughout a witness for the world of spirit, proceeding from the same hand, growing out of the same root, and being constituted for that very end. All lovers of truth readily acknowledge these mysterious harmonies, and the force of arguments derived from them.” The things on earth are but copies of things in heaven, as says the sublime poet—

“What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein,
Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought !”

THE BOOK OF GENESIS is for many reasons the most wonderful of all the books in the Bible. In this Genesis we see

FIRST : THE ORIGIN OF CREATION AND OF INSTITUTIONS.

1. *The origin of creation.* “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (i. 1).

2. *The origin of the human race.* “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image : in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them” (i. 26, 27 ; ii. 7).

3. *The origin of the Sabbath.* “And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made ; and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He

had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (ii. 2, 3).

4. *The origin of marriage.* “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an helpmeet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept ; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof ; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife ; and they shall be one flesh” (ii. 18, 21—24).

5. *The origin of sin and death.* “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying : Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; *for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* . . . And the serpent said unto the woman : Ye shall not surely die. . . . And she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat ; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat” (ii. 16, 17 ; iii. 4—7).

6. *The beginning of grace in its manifestation toward sinful man, and the origin of sacrifice.* “And the Lord God said unto the serpent [in the hearing and presence of Adam and Eve], I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. . . . Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them” (iii. 14—21).

7. *The origin of the covenant promises.* “And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord . . . and the Lord smelled a sweet savor ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake.

. . . And God said, This is the token of the covenant, which I make between me, and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud ; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth'' (viii. 20—22 ; ix.1—17).

8. *The origin of races, nations, and tongues* (x., xi.). These two chapters are by the most learned ethnologists confessed to contain more exact information on these most interesting topics than has been, or can be, anywhere else found by students.

9. *The origin of the chosen people*. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram : Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred ; and I will make of thee a great nation'' (xii. 1—3).

When we think of it, these nine facts recorded in the Book of Genesis, which solve some of the most important questions that are proposed to the thought of man, would give an importance to Genesis that cannot attach to any other known writing in the world.

But this bundle of beginnings is the mere wave-sheaf from this harvest field of truth.

SECOND : THE COURSE OF HUMAN NATURE AS IT FLOWS FROM THE ORIGINAL SOURCE IN ADAM. Here we see all the forms of life which either by nature or grace can grow out of the root of the old Adam. "Adam and his outcome," says an able writer on this book, "by grace and nature, reveal in embryo the whole mystery of grace and nature in the creature. It is thus the abstract of the Bible with the long sum of the Divine Counsel worked out and expressed in God's Algebra."

1. If we look at human nature as a whole, *Genesis* shows us the utter failure of man. First, we see him in

Adam, who, with his God-given wife, notwithstanding God made them upright and in his own image, so soon failed in their obedience and trust, and thus fell under the sentence of death and were banished from Eden. But before God, in obedience to law and government, drove them out, He put the lamp of promise in their hands, and clothed them with coats of skins (iii. 15—24). Again the race is started off under a dispensation of grace. We need hardly speak of failure in Cain, who slew his brother, and stained the virgin earth with blood that cried out to God (iv. 10). But failure is seen even in the righteous and believing line through Seth, whom God gave to Adam and his wife in the stead of the righteous Abel whom Cain slew. At this time the distinct recognition of the Lord became common in the family of Seth ; and with him possibly began the first formal worship of God, for “then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (iv. 25, 26). Righteousness seems to have had some sway in the earth during this period, in which also Enoch appears, who “walked with God” (v. 22). Even this would imply a falling away on the part of the many. Indeed, Enoch seems to have been the only standard-bearer of faith in his age (Heb. xi. 5). But now we find that apostasy had become general, even among the children of God, or the righteous line of Seth ; for the sons of God began to intermarry with the daughters of men, or the Cainites (vi. 2) ; and in the embrace of the world the Church was soon extinguished. The failure and descent into sin was very rapid, for “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth” (vi. 5), so great that He decided to destroy every living thing, man and beast. How awful does the failure of man, so far as righteousness is concerned, seem at this time !

Yet to give the race a new start, and a new trial, Noah, the great-grandson of Enoch, also “found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” and “walked with God” as did Enoch (vi. 8, 9). Noah is now to be a young world’s new father. The flood rolls over the old world, and buries it deep under judgment and death; while Noah with his ark—in which God shut him in, with his family and the animals, for a seed with which to plant the new world—emerges as through a regeneration; and the race starts off again under new and better auspices, for God makes a special covenant with Noah on behalf of the earth (viii. 20—22; ix. 1—17). Noah and his family move out of the ark (ix. 18). Surely with the fearful judgment of God just behind them, and the new covenant bow bending over them, the race will learn to walk henceforth with God. But, alas! the first vintage leads to failure in Noah, and the flesh triumphs over the spirit in Noah’s drunkenness. Ham looks upon his father’s nakedness, and a father’s curse falls upon him (ix. 22—25). The failure in the family of Noah is complete in their unholy attempt at Babel, when the Lord answered their “Go to, let us build,” by his “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language” (xi. 4, 7). “So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth” (v. 8). So far as the record shows, this new start of the race under Noah failed, and ended in universal idolatry, for even Terah, the father of Abraham, was an idolater (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14, 15).

Out of this idolatrous family God called Abram in order to give the race yet another start; and that it might this time be even more favorable, Abram is separated from his family and from the nations, and personally led by God, who talked with him as a man talketh to his friend. Moreover, that the *divine* experi-

ment might be more favorably tried, the rest of the world was left to its sinful courses ; and grace limits itself to one family, who should be walled in from the nations around about them (Gen. xii. 1—3). We need not dwell upon this last experiment with human nature under the old dispensation ; the road is a short but sad one. Through Isaac and Jacob we trace this chosen family, and find them at last landed in hopeless bondage in the house of Egypt, the type of the luxurious and lascivious world ; and though God kept them a distinct race of people, we learn from Joshua that they became idolatrous in Egypt (Josh. xxiv. 14). Had God left the race, and dealt no more with them in grace, it must have ended here in the most miserable failure—failure in Adam ; failure in the family of Seth ; failure in the family of Noah ; and failure in the family of Abraham, the friend of God, and most highly favored of the patriarchs. Truly Genesis may be called the book of human failure.

We may add, by way of application of this very apparent fact, that it was necessary for man to know by failure and sin his own weakness and insufficiency, before he would voluntarily choose God for his portion. For the same reason God drove the man out of the garden, and let him know the bitterness of sin, that he might not henceforth choose the creature as his good ; but proving the poverty of the world, and all that is in it, to meet the needs of his godlike nature, overmade for this world, he might turn to God, the only satisfying portion of the soul. This is the method of grace : man weary and heavy-laden, starving on the husks of this world, broken and distressed by its sorrows, turns in despair to God ; even as Israel in Egypt sighed and cried by reason of their bondage, and their cry came up to God (Exod. ii.).

THIRD : MAN AS HE IS BY NATURE AND GRACE. We have taken a brief look at man as a whole race, and as such have seen his failure in righteousness. As we look more closely, we see the race clearly divided into two great families, not by race lines, but by spiritual lines. The race flows forth from its head in Adam into two streams,—one stream through Cain being the seed of the serpent ; not because of any difference in their nature, but because they choose the way and course of sin, and “ walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. ii. 2). The other line is through Abel-Seth, and these are characterized by faith in God upon whom they “ call.”

In Cain we find the following characteristics :—

1. A haughty spirit, manifested by his sacrifice of the fruits of the ground, in which he refused to confess sin and forfeited life, by offering a life to God, as did Abel his brother by an act of faith. Even Cain recognizes the reasonableness and the need of worship ; but it must be a worship that is of the earth, and in which there is no confession of sin, and no cry for grace and mercy by blood. This same spirit was in Adam and Eve, who recognized the need of a covering for their nakedness (*sin*), and so made *themselves* aprons of leaves ; not knowing that God only could cover them, and that with coats of skins, taken doubtless from the first animals ever slain, and that for sacrifice. And this characteristic is seen in all children of nature, who in their approaches to God always come with the fruit of their own labor : even when they have a zeal of God, they go about to establish their own righteousness (Rom. x. 3).

2. A jealous hatred of Abel, who “ by faith offered

a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Heb. xi. 4). This hatred ended in the murder of Abel. “And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John iii. 12). This Cain-spirit is seen in the whole line of unbelievers unto this day. It refuses to obey God itself, and hates those who do. Cain hated Abel; Ishmael hated Isaac, and mocked him (Gen. xxi. 9); Esau hated Jacob, and would have slain him, because his brother received the blessing which he so lightly threw away for a mess of pottage (xxv. 32, 34; xxvii. 41); the children of Jacob hated Joseph, and sold him into Egypt (xxxvii. 4, 28); and this Cain-spirit culminated in the hatred by the world of the Christ, the true Abel, who offered himself a sacrifice for sin; and they with wicked hands slew the Lord of glory, and hanged Him on a tree (John xv. 25; Acts ii. 23; iii. 15; v. 30). And unto this day does Cain hate all those who, denying human righteousness, come to God through the acceptable and accepted offering of Christ. This is the “way of Cain” (Jude 11), which prefers reason to revelation, self-righteousness to that which is by faith in the appointed Sacrifice, and which hates those who through the obedience of faith are accepted of God.

3. Another characteristic of Cain and his spiritual descendants is seen in the fact, that when he went out from the presence of the Lord he at once *buildded a city* (Gen. iv. 16, 17). It may not seem to have special significance in the eyes of many, but “city building” and city living, with the “fine arts” of life, have been the characteristics of the “world” since the days of Cain. It is “the pride of life” (1 John ii. 16), which is not of the Father, but of the world. This is the more striking when

we consider that the righteous line through Abel-Seth were ever dwellers in tents, as were Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob ; because they were pilgrims and strangers in this world, not seeking permanent habitations here, but seeking a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. xi. 8—10). That this is no fanciful observation may be abundantly shown from the fact that when the children of Israel went into the promised land for permanent (?) dwelling, and occupied and built cities, it was an ordinance with them from God that once every year all born Israelites must needs move out of their houses, and erect temporary booths, and dwell in them seven days, that they might not forget that here they had no continuing city (Lev. xxiii. 42, 43). An interesting account of the revival of this custom is found in Nehemiah viii. 14—18, after the return of the people to the land and city of God ; the result of which was that the people of God had great gladness.

4. The Cainites were the first to give themselves up to the pursuit of pleasure and the mechanical arts, with the view of gratifying the flesh and getting possession of the world (Gen. iv. 21, 22). *Pleasure* and *possession* are evermore the objects of the Cain-spirit. In God they have neither ; and so they seek them in this world. In the pursuit of these they gave rein to the imaginations of their heart, and sought them in corruption and blood until the whole earth was filled with their violence (Gen. vi. 5 ; Matt. xxiv. 37, 38). This same spirit came out to the full in the vile cities of the plain, which God overthrew (Gen. xviii. 20 ; xix. 24, 25 ; Luke xvii. 28, 29). Even so it is now with the Cain-world which rejects God and his Christ,—it “ seeks out many inventions ” (Eccl. vii. 29),—gains possession of the world, and eats, drinks, and makes merry (Luke xii. 18—20), not knowing that

God says to such now (as in the days of Noah and Lot), “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

5. We find violence and murder reappearing in the Cain line in the sixth generation, when Lamech celebrated in the first poetry ever written his vengeance in the slaying of a man (Gen. iv. 23).

6. We see also in this line the introduction of polygamy, or the taking of more than one wife. Some have supposed that the murderous spirit and deeds of Lamech were developed in connection with his violation of the divine law of marriage, and the subsequent quarrels in his own unhallowed domestic relations. But we need not pursue this line of suggestion further.

Let us turn briefly to the righteous branch of the family of Adam. (1.) In Abel we discover the righteousness of faith—the recognition of his own sin, and of the justness of the sentence of death ; his consequent readiness to draw near to God with an offering of divine appointment, in which the blood both expiates the sin and reconciles to God (Gen. iv. 4 ; Heb. xi. 4). (2.) As already intimated, in Seth’s time (who was in the place of Abel), men—his descendants—both called upon the name of the Lord, and called themselves by his name (iv. 26). Here is the distinct confession of God, not only as Creator, but as Jehovah (Saviour). All this is utterly absent in the annals of Cain’s descendants. This perhaps was the formal institution of religious service, or the public worship of Jehovah. (3.) In Enoch (v. 22) we find holy communion and companionship with God. Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and throughout this life of faith he both preached the Gospel and prophesied of the final coming of the Lord with his

saints to judge the world (Jude 14, 15), and received this testimony "that he pleased God" (Heb. xi. 5). Here also we find the dreary record of unfailing death broken. For by faith "Enoch was translated, that he should not see death." How blessed that God should thus break in upon death and snatch his saints from his power ! Thus Enoch is the promise of ONE who also ascended up on high to give life to all who, like Enoch, walk with God. (4.) In Noah we see a man who "found grace in the eyes of Jehovah, a just man, and perfect in his generations," who also "walked with God" (Gen. vi. 8, 9). In Noah the distinct characteristics of righteousness and justice flowing from *grace* are seen as opposed to the natural outcome of man in the Cainite world who perished in the flood. (5.) In Abraham we see separation from the idolatrous world ; the characteristic of faith preëminently illustrated, and the friendship of God sealed to man (xii. 1, 2 ; James ii. 23). (6.) Through him (Abraham) we see that God is to perpetuate to and for Himself a righteous seed in the earth, not by natural descent but by spiritual descent ; for we are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, who is the seed to whom the promise was given in Abraham (Gal. iii. 16—26). This is sufficient to give us a suggestion of the wealth of teaching in Genesis, of the outcome of Adam, the parent stock of man, as it is seen by nature and grace.

FOURTH : THE TYPES IN GENESIS ARE ALSO WELL WORTHY OUR CAREFUL STUDY. We cannot do more than point out some of them by way of illustration.

1. The creation is but a type of God's new creation in man, for "if any man be in Christ Jesus there is a new creation," or, he is a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17). The void and formless earth is but a type of the chaotic state

of man until the Spirit of God broods over him for regeneration ; for except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John iii. 3—5). The darkness over the face of the void earth is but the moral condition of the world until the true Light came, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John i. 5, 9). For " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). And what is " the day" but the type of that spiritual environment that is congenial to the children of God, in which also they are commanded to walk ; and what is night but that moral condition in which the children of " the wicked one" walk and have their pleasures. " Ye are all the children of light, and children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess. v. 5). Also the " night" stands for this present world, which is in darkness ; and the " day" for that glorious dawn which is soon to arise out of the night of sin and death. " The *night* is far spent, the *day* is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). The planting of the earth with seed, that brought forth after its kind, all good at the first (Gen. i. 12) ; but afterwards, when sin had come in, and the earth was cursed, " thorns and thistles" (iii. 17, 18)—is but the parable in creation which the Master brought out in the parable of tares. " The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed *good seed* in his field ; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed *tares* among the wheat. . . . The good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked one" (Matt. xiii. 25, 26, 38, 39 ; Heb. vi. 7, 8 ; xii. 15). Truth and error

sown in human hearts bring forth righteousness and sin, blessing and cursing.

The sun, moon, and stars, what are they but great lights in the moral firmament? Christ is that "Sun of Righteousness that rises with healing in his wings" (Mal. iv. 2), and that "day-spring from on high that gives light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke i. 78, 79). The Church is that lesser body that, with borrowed light from the Sun of Righteousness, looketh forth in the morning, "fair as the moon" (Cant. vi. 10), to give light to the world during the absence of the sun, "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21). And the stars are those Christians who, in close fellowship with their Lord, are the "wise," who "shine as the brightness of the firmament," and turn many to righteousness (Dan. xii. 3); they are also pastors, the "angels of the churches," whom Christ holds in his right hand (Rev. i. 16, 20).

2. Adam is a type of Christ: the first Adam, in whom all died, the head of the earthly race of men; the second Adam, Christ in whom all are made alive, the head of the heavenly race of spiritual men: "and so it is written, The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). From Adam we *inherit* by natural generation a natural life or soul. In Christ we receive spiritual life, not by being born, but by being born again through faith in Him (John i. 11, 12). We are the children of Adam by nature, but we "are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26).

3. Eve, the wife of Adam, taken out of his side and made one with him, is the foreshadowing of that spiritual Bride of the second Adam—the Church of God; taken

out of the wounded side of Christ and made one with Him. Therefore it is written : "Husbands, love your wives ; even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. . . . For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. v. 25, 30—32). Eve is the type of the Church, and the institution of marriage is the type of the sacred relation between believers and Christ.

4. The Sabbath is the type of that spiritual rest which comes to the soul through the finished work of Christ. When God finished the work of creation, and saw that all was "very good," "He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Gen. ii. 2, 3). But no sooner had He rested from the work of creation than He began (because man had sinned) the work of redemption ; and this work He continued until Jesus Christ finished our redemption, ascended, and *sat down* on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Col. iii. 1 ; Heb. i. 3 ; x. 12), so that we enter no more into that old sabbath that commemorates rest from the work of creation, but into that sabbath which shows forth the finished work of redemption. We cease from the imperfect works of the flesh, and enter into rest (sabbath) with Christ. "For we which have believed *do* enter into rest (sabbath). There remaineth therefore a keeping of sabbath [margin] for the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Heb. iv. 1—11).

5. The tree of life in the garden clearly shows us Christ ; whose flesh we may eat and live, not in the im-

mortality of sin, but in the power of eternal life from which all sin is excluded (John vi. 53—57). The tree of knowledge of good and evil is also by antithesis a type of Christ. Adam ate of that tree and gained knowledge of “good and evil,” but from the Devil’s point of view ; at the same time, sinning, he lost his soul. But now Adam’s sons may eat of Christ, and gain the knowledge of God and the possession of everlasting life. Adam ate and died ; we may eat and live.

6. What do the fig-leaves sewn together and used for aprons show, but the attempt of men to cover the nakedness of their sin with their own works ? and what do the coats of skins which God made and gave them instead, represent, but the righteousness of God through the offering of Christ (Gen. iii. 7, 21) ?

7. The driving of the pair out of the garden shows how, on account of sin, the righteous government of God drives us forth from his presence ; while the promise given at the same time shows how we are to come back to Him, not through the gates of the old Eden, but through that seed of the woman, through Him who says, “I am the door.” This is further seen, as we have already shown, by Abel, who draws near to God, and is accepted through the offering of the Lamb, the type of Christ, who in the fulness of time was offered for the sin of the world (John i. 29).

8. The flood and the ark are figures of the judgment of God against sin, and the way of salvation by Christ, who lifts us above the judgment-waters. “God gave man the earth, and made him lord over it ; man abused the gift and forfeited it, brought a curse upon it. Then God opened heaven to man, and a way to it (by the ark—Christ) ; and urged man to enter into the kingdom, and escape the curse that sin had entailed. Noah entered

in by faith ; the antediluvians refused. Noah was saved ; they perished all." So is it now ; Christ is both our ark and our Noah, " that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). The flood and the ark also tell of regeneration, that passing from the old world of nature to the new world of covenant, from death to life, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In fellowship with Him we are on the resurrection side of the world. " The like figure whereunto (Noah and the ark), even baptism, doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21). Time and space fail us to go further. It will be seen that these things which we have pointed out are not striking coincidences, but types expounded and interpreted by the Scriptures themselves.

I have spoken incidentally of many characters that exhibit striking truths in their lives—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ishmael, Esau, Lot, and others ; and let it not be supposed that the lines of teachings we have so briefly traced out are all that Genesis contains. For indeed every chapter and every incident in the wonderful histories therein recorded reveal truth to those who have eyes to see it. But this may suffice to lure you on to study, and to search after truth for yourself, which easily yields itself to those who hunger after it, and use it not for pride but for edification.

Of course I do not pretend to have given a full treatment of this wonderful book. Other lines of thought still more wonderful may be started and carried out. All I hoped to do was to give a hint as to its exhaustless fulness. It is not possible to follow out, in this little volume, in the other books even so slight a treatment as we have given to Genesis. Yet I assure my readers, that

each of them is crowded in like manner with spiritual teachings. Each book is a fruitful bough, laden with richest spiritual food, and is accessible to all who will patiently turn over its leaves and seek for it. For example :

EXODUS is the book of redemption ; showing us how God, hearing the cry of his people, by reason of their burdens, “came down” to save them, and sent his apostle Moses (Heb. iii. 1) into Egypt for them, and brought them out with a high hand, not by might only, but by *blood*, which stood between him and the destroyer, even as Christ our passover is slain for us, and his blood stands between us and the sentence of death.

LEVITICUS is the book of worship ; and shows how guilty man can draw near to God by blood in the hands of an High Priest (Heb. iii. 1), who goes into the holiest of all, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

NUMBERS is the book of wilderness wanderings, showing us how by unbelief and wilful provocations the people knew God’s breach of promise (Num. xiv. 34), and entered not in because of unbelief (Heb. iii. 7—19).

DEUTERONOMY shows us how God cares for the welfare of his people, and instructs them in courses of conduct for life in Canaan, giving promises and warnings, setting forth death and life, and urging them to choose life.

JOSHUA shows us the victories of faith, and illustrates that good fight, and how we are to lay hold on eternal life, by *taking possession* of that which is *given* to us in covenant relation.

JUDGES shows us the failure of God’s people in covenant relation, through affiliation with the unbelieving world.

And so we might go through these books, plucking out the central truth from each, and then following out also the many incidental and collateral truths. But our purpose is not to do this for you, but only to put you in a way of doing it for yourself. In order, however, to help you in this direction we have added in an appendix a key word table to all the books of the Bible, which we commend to your attention.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Unity of plan and development of doctrine—The grand sweep of events recorded—Structure and characteristics—Four gospels not accidents, but to give a rounded view of Christ—Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus is seen as the King—Mark's Gospel, in which Jesus is seen as the Servant of his Father—Luke's Gospel, in which Jesus is seen as the brother and fellow of Mankind—John's Gospel, in which Jesus is seen as the Eternal Son of God.

IN the NEW TESTAMENT we find the same unity in plan, the same diversity in method and style, the same individuality and special characteristics of the different books, that met us in the Old Testament. Especially do we recognize the same Spirit breathing through and animating all its parts, and the same beautiful progress and development of doctrine and revelation.

The sweep of events in the New Testament is grand and inspiring beyond measure. We behold in it, or rather through it, the Eternal Word in the bosom of the Eternal Father, the creator and sustainer of all worlds (John i. 3 ; Col. i. 16, 17). In that distant and ever present eternity we also behold Him the covenant Head of the redemption race ; a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. xiii. 8). In the fulness of time He comes forth, made flesh under the law, and born of a woman (Gal. iv. 4), and laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling-clothes (Luke ii. 7), thus, by incarnation taking hold on the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 14—16), and human nature (Phil. ii. 7, 8).

Then we get a glimpse of his child-life. In his entry upon public ministry, He is introduced to the world in his redemptive character as the Lamb of God (John i. 29). And finally his earthly ministry closes, by his bearing our sins in his own body upon the tree ; suffering, the Just for the unjust ; being delivered for our offences, and redeeming us unto God with his precious blood (1 Pet. ii. 24 ; iii. 18 ; i. 18, 19 ; Rom. iv. 25).

He reappears in resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 4) ; and after showing Himself to many witnesses ascends again into heaven, taking with Him his redeemed and glorified human nature (Acts i. 11). There He appears in the presence of God in our behalf, having with his own precious blood obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. ix. 12, 24). There we behold Him again, having purged our sins, sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, with all the angels of God worshipping Him (Heb. i. 3, 6).

There He will remain until He comes again a second time, without sin unto salvation (Heb. ix. 28), when He will raise the sleeping saints, change the living, and catch up all into heaven (1 Thess. iv. 13—18), where his glorious kingdom will be organized (Rev. iv.). With Him, in glory, his saints will wait until all the judgment woes upon an unbelieving world are poured out. Then He goes forth with his “called, and chosen, and faithful” ones to make war with the Beast, and overcome him (Rev. xvii. 12—14). Then the remnant of God’s people are called out of Babylon, and the great city cast down (Rev. xviii.).

Then comes the magnificent and glorious consummation—the marriage of the Lamb to his redeemed and sanctified Bride. After casting into the pit the Beast and False Prophet, and the binding of Satan with a

great chain, and casting him into the bottomless pit, the millennium is ushered in (Rev. xix., xx.). Then one more last struggle with the Devil (who has been released) and the deceived of the nations, the final and complete overthrow of Satan, final judgment, and punishment of the impenitent dead (Rev. xx. 7—15). Then the end of this dispensation, and the beginning of another, viz.: the new Heaven and new Earth, with the city of God coming down, and God dwelling there with men below (Rev. xxi., xxii.). A more magnificent panorama of events could not be brought before the mind, heart, and imagination of man.

Intermediately we witness the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the gathering of the Church of God by the preaching of the Gospel. All this, together with the planting and training of the Church, is drawn out in the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles.

Looking now to the structure and characteristics of the New Testament, we have before us : first, the four Gospels, or rather the four accounts of the life and ministry of our Lord by the Apostles and Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These four books have been aptly likened to the four foundation-stones upon which the Church of God rests. While the Acts of the Apostles show us the Church in course of construction, the Epistles are the books of divine counsel to the gathered Church, and the Revelation is the drawing aside of the curtain to give us a view of the Church in glory.

The question is often asked why there should be *four* accounts of the life of our Lord instead of *one*. I think it is apparent why the Gospels were written just as they were. The life and portrait of Jesus are much more perfectly presented under the fourfold aspect which we

get now than we could have had them by means of a single account. These Gospels are both independent of, and interdependent upon, each other. That is, each Evangelist gives a peculiar prominence to *special features* of the life and ministry of Christ, while they all give things in common.

We may illustrate it in this way. Alexander Hamilton was a man of varied genius. His different characteristics impressed different men. Now, suppose one biographer should say, in writing the life of Hamilton, I mean to bring to the foreground the *military chieftain*; and so while his great abilities as a statesman, as a financier, and his pre-eminent qualities as a man, are all spoken of, still his military career is the special feature of the book. Another friend writes, and he brings to the front the *statesman*. Still another writes, and he brings out in strongest relief the *financier*; and yet a fourth one writes, and while he does ample credit to all his other characteristics, he makes the *man* himself the great feature of his book. It is readily seen how such a fourfold view would give us the best idea of the common subject of the memoirs. So it is with the different records of the life of Christ.

Or take another illustration. A figure reflected in the mirror shows the flat shape of the side presented to the mirror. But by an arrangement of concentric mirrors the image presented is brought into the centre in all its varied and full proportions. The Gospels are the concentric mirrors by means of which we are enabled to see the full and perfect image of Christ at every point of sight. For instance :

MATTHEW presents Jesus from the Jewish or Messianic point of view, as if he had a special desire to show the

readers of his Gospel that Jesus was indeed the *Messiah*, and the true *Lord* and *King* long promised by Moses and the Prophets. So, at the very outset, in looking at the genealogy of Matthew, we discover that it goes back only to David and Abraham, as if to show first that He was the promised seed of Abraham, and of the royal stock of David ; for from those two heads, Abraham and David, the Messianic promises proceed. Again the character of Jesus is pre-eminently kingly in Matthew's Gospel. Indeed, the term "the kingdom of heaven" is peculiar to this Gospel. The magi came seeking Him that was "born *King* of the Jews." In reading Matthew's Gospel we want to keep this fact in mind, the Christ is here the Messiah and the promised King. I have written over the top of Matthew's Gospel on the upper margin, in my Bible, the following :

"Behold, a KING shall reign" (Isa. xxxii. 1).

"Son and Lord, according to promise."

"Abraham's Son and David's Lord."

The symbol for Matthew's Gospel is that of the LION, type of this kingly character (Gen. xlix. 9 ; Rev. v. 5).

MARK shows us Jesus from an entirely different point of view. There is not the least foundation for the idea that Mark's Gospel is but an abridgment of Matthew's. In Mark, we have no genealogy ; but forthwith we see Jesus here as the friend and helper of man. In the very first chapter He enters upon his ministry, and we see Him working miracles of compassion and mercy. In this character of compassionate helper of man, He is seen throughout the book. He is never once spoken of as King or Lord until after his resurrection. In this Gospel we see Him as the SERVANT of HIS FATHER,

coming “not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (x. 45). This book is crowded with miracles, and radiant with minute details that show his tender and compassionate heart. Meek and lowly does this Divine Servant appear, wholly unselfish in his desire to meet and serve the need of man. He who would learn the secret of true service, and be qualified for it, let him study Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. I have these lines on the upper margin of this Gospel in my Bible :

“Behold my SERVANT !” (Isa. xlii. 1).

“Christ, the Servant of his Father, and the One who meets men’s need.”

The OX is the true symbol of this Gospel, as it is a type of Christ’s character in patient service.

LUKE gives us still another and very striking view of Christ. Here we have a detailed account of his human nature ; and in the genealogy we see Him linked, not to Abraham and David, but his kinship to MAN as such is seen, and his descent from Adam is brought before us. He is not here Messiah, but the *Son of Man*, the Saviour of the world. In all this Gospel we find Christ in his broad human relationships. His kingly character does not so much appear as his great human heart. He is “the Friend of publicans and sinners” (vii., xv.). He manifests God’s love to the lost sheep, and to the prodigal sinner who had gone into a far country. In Matthew He is kin to them that are nigh ; in Luke, to them that are far off. Indeed, we see Him entering into the world here in the midst of Gentile conditions, at the time of the taxing, during the reign of a Gentile power, etc. In Matthew we read of a “certain *king* who made a mar-

riage for his son" (xxii. 1). In Luke the same parable is given with this formula, "a certain *man* made a great supper," etc. (xiv. 16). In Matthew it is the "kingdom of heaven," which is the formulation of the Jewish idea; in Luke it is the "kingdom of *God*," which is the universal idea. The former designation is peculiar to Matthew; the latter, while it occasionally appears in Matthew, is lifted into great and conspicuous prominence in Luke. Luke is the first to bring out the fact that the superscription of the cross was written in the *Greek* and *Latin* as well as in the Hebrew, as if to certify the universality of the atonement. This fact does not appear in Matthew, as it is foreign to the author's purpose; so neither does it in Mark; but it appears in John, as his Gospel too is a presentation of the Saviour in his universal character. It seems also peculiarly meet that this Gospel to the world, to universal man, should be written by a Gentile, and not a Jew. I have written on the upper margin of my Bible over Luke's Gospel these lines:

"Behold the MAN!" (John xix. 5).

"Christ the Son of Man, in his service and ministry of grace to and among men."

"The proper symbol for the Gospel of Luke is the MAN, as a type of Christ's broad human relations."

JOHN gives us still another and different view of Christ. Here we also have a genealogy, but differing vastly from that of Matthew or Luke. John does not trace his *human* descent according to the flesh, but soars away into eternity, and plucks Him, as it were, from the very bosom of God, and writes his history, as He is, the eternal, uncreated Word of God, who in the beginning was

with God, and who is God. Here He is the LIGHT of the world, the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. We see Him clothed in the flesh ; at the same time we are assured that, though the Son of Man, his (then) present and true place “is in heaven” (iii. 13). Here Christ asserts the truth of his oneness with God in all the breadth of that doctrine : “ I am from above ; ” “ I am not of this world ” (viii. 23). “ I and my Father are one ” (x. 30). “ He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ” (xiv. 9). Here He asserts that “ all men should honor the Son, *even as they* honor the Father ” (v. 23). In John the great “ I AM ” of the burning bush reappears ; this time not in a bush but in human nature. But everywhere He asserts Himself, and *fills out* the “ I AM ” name thus : “ I AM the bread of life ” (vi. 35). “ I AM the light of the world ” (viii. 12). “ Before Abraham was, I AM ” (viii. 58). “ I AM the door ” (x. 9). “ I AM the good shepherd ” (x. 11). “ I AM the resurrection and the life ” (xi. 25). “ I AM the way, the truth, and the life ” (xiv. 6). “ I AM the true vine ” (xv. 1). In the Book of Revelation John still further gives us this truth : “ I AM Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ” (Rev. i. 8, 11). “ I AM He that liveth ” (i. 18). “ I AM the bright and morning star ” (xxii. 16). Indeed, Jesus is exhibited in John’s whole Gospel in the light of a divine egoism which on any other assumption than that He is God manifest in the flesh would be intolerable and monstrous. Here we find His self-assertion everywhere. “ Verily, verily I say unto you,” is peculiar to John. If you are curious to note the difference in the effect produced on the mind by the use of the personal pronouns, in the mouth of the speaker, such as “ I,” “ me,” “ my,” “ mine,” you need go no farther than to compare John xvi., where Jesus speaks of himself forty-six

times, using the pronoun "I" thirty times, and "Me" and "Mine" sixteen times ; and the twenty-ninth chapter of Job, where Job speaks of himself fifty times, using the same pronouns as above.

How differently these egoists affect us ! In the one case we bow with reverence in the presence of One who has the right in Himself to say "I ;" and who, if He did not thus assert Himself, would leave us disappointed, and with the feeling that there was something lacking in Him. In the other case, we are filled with mingled feelings of pity and surprise at what seems a vain and weak selfishness in a man of such genuine and sincere piety as Job. In a word, John brings out the divine nature and character of Jesus Christ, and we behold "His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (i. 14). Over the upper margin of John's Gospel, in my Bible, I have written :

"Behold the LAMB OF GOD !" (John i. 29).

"Jesus, the Son of God, seen in the moral glory of his person and work."

The EAGLE is the symbol for John's Gospel—fitting type of his divinity.

Thus the four Gospels give us four phases of the life of Him who is both Saviour and Lord (Rev. iv. 6, 7).*

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.—Dean Alford calls this book the Gospel of the Risen Jesus, or the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. In this book we see what Jesus continued to do from heaven, as in Luke's Gospel narrative, who also is the author of this book, we saw what Jesus "began

* For a full and helpful discussion of the four phases of the Gospels, see *Differences of the Four Gospels*, by Andrew Jukes.

both to do and teach” (i. 1). In this book we see Jesus ascending on high (i. 9) where He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour (v. 31), and from thence shedding down the Holy Ghost (ii. 1—4, 33). The Gospels show us the foundation corner-stones of the great edifice which God is building for an habitation for Himself through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22); the Acts give a history of the gathering in and edifying together of those living stones (1 Pet. ii. 5). In other words we see in the Acts the Church of God in process of construction.

THE EPISTLES.—The third main division of the New Testament, viz. : the Epistles, have another and distinct relation. The Gospels show us the foundations of the building. The Acts show us the Church of God gathered. The Epistles give us God’s instruction to his Church—most of those of Paul being addressed to organized churches; the Epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude being addressed either to individuals or to the Christians scattered abroad. The pastoral Epistles of Paul to Titus and Timothy have especial reference to the ministers of God’s house. The great Epistle to the Hebrews is an earnest warning against unbelief, and an exhortation to faith and steadfastness; and is one of the most precious books in the Bible; one that every Christian who wants to be rooted and grounded in the faith ought to become intimately acquainted with.

THE REVELATION.—Undoubtedly the sublimest and most thrilling book in the Bible is also certainly the most neglected one. Yet it is the only book that pronounces special blessing to the reader and hearers of its wondrous words (i. 3). The objection so often made that the book is so mysterious and figurative that it is not possible for the common reader to *understand* it, and that therefore

it is not profitable to read it, ought not to weigh a moment against the opening blessing upon the *reader* and *hearers* of its words. I read the book for years without any particular effort to *understand* it, except as it might interpret itself to me. And I wish devoutly and humbly to leave my testimony, that no book in the Bible is more stimulating than this. However it may be interpreted or misinterpreted, certain it is that we have here the story of the most startling events soon to take place which the world has ever witnessed ; events in which all the intelligent powers of the universe—of earth, hell, and heaven—are engaged.

Certain it is, that every one of us will be an actor in some part of that awful and glorious tragedy. Christ and his Church will be victors over all the evil forms opposed to them. The complete overthrow of sin and Satan ; the resurrection and glorification of the blood-washed Church ; the establishment in and on a regenerated earth of the Kingdom of the Most High God—are here set forth. It is not my province in this little volume to attempt an interpretation of the book ; but I feel the fire of enthusiastic anticipation kindling within me as I think of these things which must shortly come to pass. I simply indicate my belief that we are now, historically, in what we may properly call the Laodicean age of the Church (iii. 14—22) : and that at any moment the sublime events recorded in what remains of the book may begin to be fulfilled. And when once this fourth chapter opens, the prophecy of the rest of the book will be fulfilled in such rapid succession that not more than seven years will elapse before the whole will be consummated. I do not pretend to know *when* the astonishing prophetic events will begin to be unfolded in actual history ; but

only give it as my judgment that “the time is at hand ;” and urge that God’s people be found watching, for we know not the day nor the hour in which our Lord will come. I would give two passages from this book as motto texts for all Christians : “ *Behold, I stand at the door and knock : If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with Me*” (iii. 20—22) ; and “ *He which testifieth these things saith : Surely I come quickly ; Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus*” (xxii. 20).*

* For the key-notes of the books of the Bible in their order, see Appendix.

CHAPTER X.

LACK OF INTEREST IN BIBLE STUDY.

The "reason why" easily explained—Must be studied if we are to be healthful and strong Christians—Surface gold and hid treasure—A family ornamental piece of furniture—Ignorant reverence and reverent ignorance—Why it is a dull book to some—An answer—Indolence and lack of interest in the subject-matter of the Bible.

"YE do err," said Christ, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." Christians are more exposed to the assaults of Satan and the sin of unbelief through ignorance of the Scripture than from any other cause ; and yet it is a sad fact that to very many of God's people Bible-reading is a disagreeable task. The blessed book is taken up reluctantly, and laid down gladly. Next to the question, How best to study the Bible, I am often asked, "Why is it that I do not *love* to read my Bible?" I think it is easy to answer this question ; and, before trying to give some practical hints and suggestions on Bible-reading, it may be well to call attention to some facts bearing upon it, that need to be looked squarely in the face. You may not have thought of them yourself, or had your attention called to them by others.

It is probably true that the Bible is the *best known*, and, at the same time, the *least understood*, book in the world ; for the reason that it is the *most read* and *least studied* of all books. There are vast numbers of Bible-readers or mis-readers, but comparatively few Bible students. Yet, if the faith of the Christian is to be strong and vigorous ; if our Christian lives are to be

stalwart, pure, and holy, abounding in the fruit of the Spirit, they must rest upon and be developed by means of an intimate and loving acquaintance with the Word of God. What says Jude? “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith [rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith—Col. ii. 6], praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20, 21). It is absolutely impossible for any one who is not intimately acquainted with the Word of God, to attend practically to such exhortations as the foregoing; for the substance, as well as knowledge of these things, and all of them, are found only in its sacred pages.

There is, it is true, upon the surface of the Word of God so much of truth—and saving truth too—that he who runs may read and be saved. And yet there is “hid treasure” in the Bible, lying deep beneath the surface, unseen and unpossessed by the careless and superficial reader. Such a reader may find enough of this heavenly gold even on the surface to keep him from spiritual pauperism; but if he does not dig for hid treasure, he will never become opulent in the truth. I wish, therefore, to excite in you spiritual cupidity for the *hidden* treasure of God’s Word—hidden, not in the sense that there is anything beyond the understanding of the unlearned; not because God does not wish you to know and have the best things; but hidden because you are careless and indolent, because you do not read your Bible with the same attention and interest that you give to text-books used in pursuit of human learning. If you are in doubt as to what I mean by careless and superficial reading of the Bible, I will try to make my meaning plain to you in a following chapter.

There are few households in which there is not a family Bible, but generally it will be found to be a huge, cumbersome volume, lying upon the centre-table. It is never read, and but rarely opened. It has a family record in it, and is reckoned valuable on that account. It may contain the family photographs, and so be prized on that account; but it is practically of no use, *as a Bible*, to any one in the house. It is not bought to be read, but because it would not be quite respectable not to have it in the house. In fact, it is a piece of ornamental furniture. It is to be feared that if many families in our Christian land, in which the parlor Bible may be found, were citizens of Turkey, the Koran would occupy a similar place in their house. Besides the family Bible, it may be, you have one of those small-print, gilt-edged, gold or brass-clasped Bibles, which somebody gave you on your birthday, or as a reward of merit, or for a philopœna present; and it is laid away in your top bureau-drawer, or on your dressing-case, not for convenient, daily use, but because it is nice to have one "handy" in case you should want to refer to some passage, or to look up the minister's last text. Of course, this is not true of all families, or of all "professors," but it is true of too many.

Among many nominal Christians the Bible is held in a kind of ignorant reverence, or reverent ignorance, or both. There is a traditional respect and superstitious veneration for it. They believe it is the Word of God, and would be shocked to have their *faith in it* questioned; but they have not come to know and love its blessed contents from personal and prayerful acquaintance with it. Indeed with many it is a mere fetish. I remember, when I was a boy, if I had been unusually naughty or disobedient during the day, and my con-

science was troubling me—though I had no *real* fear of God—when night came I used to take a Bible, and put it under my pillow open, or lay it on a table near the head of my bed, with a feeling that somehow I should be safer for its proximity. I am inclined to think there is a good deal of that kind of reverence for God's Word. We laugh at the ignorant Romanists for wearing an amulet or charm about their necks ; and yet there are many Protestants who make an amulet out of the Bible. Manifestly this is not the way we should treat the book, which *itself* cannot give life, but which bears witness to Him who is the Light and Life of the world (John v. 39). We need a heart-to-heart communion with the Son of God through his Word.

“ I don't like to read the Bible, as I am sure I ought to. Instead, it often seems dull and uninteresting to me.” So say many Christians. “ What,” I often reply, “ can be the reason of this ? You are interested in poetry and fiction ; in an ordinary lecture ; in biography and travels ; in history and science. In almost everything appertaining to literature you take great interest ; and your leisure hours are spent in reading an endless variety of books—good books, too, for that matter ; but the BIBLE, God's blessed revelation, filled with most wonderful treasures of saving knowledge, is counted a dull and uninteresting book ! ”

WHY ? I think there are many reasons for it. The first one is *indolence*. You are too indolent to put yourself in practical possession of the first principles of Bible study. The blame of this lack of knowledge “ *how to study the Bible* ” may be partly borne by those whose business it is to be teachers of the Word. But it is very evident that if you had paid no more attention to the study of grammar and mathematics than you do to the

study of God's Word, you would be in practical ignorance of those useful branches of knowledge. And yet many of you act as if the mere opening of the Bible, and the desultory reading of a chapter here and there, as often as your mood prompts you, is enough to give you a joyful knowledge of its precious mysteries. No pains are taken to find out the leading features and great characteristics of the Bible, which, if they were in your possession, would lead you out into intensely interesting lines of study, and into the most delightful communion with God.

Then, there is a real *lack of interest in the subject-matter of the Bible*. Many Christians are more interested in their merchandise, their farms, their financial schemes, in the rise and fall of stocks, in a proposed journey to Europe, in the gaities of the season, or in something of a worldly character, than in the things of the kingdom of heaven—the new birth, repentance, faith, the atonement, the conditions of discipleship, the resurrection of the dead, and the life to come, with all its “exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” They have never really taken their position in the world as pilgrims and strangers. There is such a lack of practical consecration to God that they have not the mind or heart to know what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God (Rom. xii. 1, 2).

If you expected to make California your home in the next six months, would you not be interested in that country? I once knew an old man whose son went out to Oregon, where he became prosperous, purchased a great farm, and was getting it under magnificent cultivation. He often wrote home to his family about Oregon, and his prosperity. By and by he sent for his brother to come out there and live with him; and then he sent

for his sister and her husband. One by one all the boys and their wives, and all the sisters and their husbands, were settled and prospering in Oregon. That old man was far more interested in Oregon than in Indiana, where he was born, and had lived all his days. He had many books on Oregon; he *studied* Oregon, its climate and soil, its increasing population, its commerce and prospects. Presently the son wrote to the old man, “We are coming for you, father.” After that the old man was more interested than ever. He talked about Oregon more and more, when he went to visit his neighbors or his neighbors came to visit him; he talked to his farm hands; up and down the streets he talked about Oregon, until some people thought he had well-nigh gone crazy.

Do we not often forget that “our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”? (Phil. iii. 20). Have we not sometimes forgotten that He said, “I go to prepare a place for you,” and “if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also?” (John xiv. 1—3). Oh, what interests we have there! Our children are there; our fathers and mothers, our kindred and friends are there; and every day more are going. Now, our Saviour has left us word, “Be ye also ready, for in an hour you think not I will come for you.” Ah, my dear friends, why are we not interested in heaven, and in all the truth that pertains to heaven? We *should be* interested in all the way to heaven; in all the revelation that God has made touching our redemption, and our preparation for that blessed country. I am sure if Christians were *really* interested in these things—if they esteemed them as practical realities, as Moses and Paul did—they would

experience wonderful delight in the study of the Bible.

Not to be interested in Bible study argues a life of unbelief and worldliness. It is with such Christians as it was with the children of Israel in the wilderness : "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. iv. 2). It is unbelief and worldliness on the part of many Christians that rob them of a delightful and loving interest in God's Word. The flesh and the world have taken the place, in their minds and hearts, of God and his salvation.

CHAPTER XI.

BIBLE MIS-READERS.

Mistakes into which Christians fall in reading or mis-reading their Bibles—Fragmentary Readers—Routine Readers—Formal Readers—Periodic Readers—Unbelieving Mis-readers—Noted unbelievers who “know the Bible by heart”—A Shallow and False Pretence—Spiritual Goliaths—How to slay them—Their stock of knowledge—Bible difficulties again.

THERE are many wretched habits into which Christians allow themselves to fall. They are taken possession of by these habits, and not a few are held close prisoners in their bonds all their lives. This bondage to bad habits in Bible reading accounts very largely for the lack of interest and love for the Word of God. If any of my readers should recognize themselves in the list of mis-readers pointed out in the following pages, I earnestly hope they will make a great and determined effort for deliverance.

Following we give a list—only partial—of Bible mis-readers :

(1.) The *partial and fragmentary readers*. I speak now of those who confine their reading to certain portions of the Bible, to the utter neglect of the larger part of it. Some never read the Old Testament Scriptures at all, but confine themselves to the New Testament ; and some even limit their reading to the Gospels. The edges of one's Bible will tell the story pretty well. You will see some persons' Bibles well thumbed at the Twenty-third Psalm, at the Fifty-third of Isaiah, at the

Fourteenth of John, at the Eighth of Romans, the Second of Ephesians, etc. Their reading is scrappy and fragmentary. They read over these favorite chapters again and again, and the result is that their knowledge is one-sided and narrow ; they have no large understanding of God's will and purposes, because they have not read or studied the Bible *comprehensively*. They get the measure of truth ; but it is out of its broad relations : they receive it through a single chapter, when it might stream through whole books.

(2.) Then there are *the routine readers*. I refer to those who run over so much of the Bible daily or weekly, according to the task they have set for themselves. They read not so much to get the "sense and understanding" of the Word (Neh. viii. 8), as to get through with their allotted task. I was conversing with a very intelligent and conscientious young woman in a New England city, not long ago, who was troubled about some difficulties in her Christian life. After awhile it appeared to me that her difficulties grew largely out of ignorance of the will of God, as plainly revealed in the Scriptures. So I said to her : " My dear friend, I am afraid you do not read your Bible much, else you would not be in difficulty on this point." " Why," she said, " I have read it daily ever since I was fourteen years old. I began then to read two chapters every day, and five on Sundays ; in this way I read the Bible through every year." To her great dismay, I replied : " Ah ! that is the trouble with you ; you have not been reading your *Bible* at all ; you have been reading *two chapters* every day and five on Sunday ; just reading chapters, chapters, chapters—and not the Word of God at all. Now tell me, is not that the truth ? Do you not hurry through your chapters ? and are you not usually glad when the task is done ?"

She admitted that it was very much the case with her, that the book was dull, and that she rarely found anything in it to interest her.

I am persuaded that there are many Christians who are content with this chapter-reading routine. No wonder the Bible is a dull book, and affords no comfort and strength to such readers. They are whipped on to their dismal task of *chapter-reading* by conscience, or to fulfil some pious resolution, or some promise. But this is not Bible-reading. The Bible is a sensitive book, and when you treat it in that way, it shuts itself up and reveals nothing to you. It is wounded. In other words, the loving Spirit, who only can give life and power to the written Word, is grieved, and so you have nothing but the empty husk of truth, which can neither feed nor delight the child of God.

I have to-day received a long letter from my dear wife : it is about home and the children ; it contains many things very precious to me ; it is the outbreathings of a faithful wife's loving heart toward her absent husband. Do you think I took up that letter, hastily counted the pages, and then sat down with a weary sigh to read it as *a task*, saying to myself ?—" Oh, dear me ! there are six closely written pages ! I suppose I must read that letter through : it is my duty ; and I want to do my duty." Should I have treated my good wife's letter so ? And if she *knew* that I received and read it thus, do you suppose she would thereafter have sent me two or three such letters a week ? I trow not. She would have been grieved and hurt, and at best would have only written me formal letters. And yet that is the way many Christians treat God's loving Word to them ; they read it as though they had no *personal* interest in its contents. It is to them an old book, con-

taining the doctrines and facts of their religion ; and not the ever-living, perennially new and fresh autograph letter of God, warm with the very life and breath of the blessed Spirit, desiring to take the things of Christ and show them to us (John xvi. 13).

(3.) Again, there are the *formal readers* of the Bible. A father gets up from the breakfast-table, goes with wife and children, and possibly servants, into the parlor or sitting-room, takes the Bible in hand, opens it at the place where the mark is (it is doubtful if he would have known where he left off yesterday but for the mark), and reads through the chapter, without note, or comment, or pause, or thought, unless he may turn over to see if the chapter be a very long one ; and thus, having galloped through the chapter he gallops through his prayer, and then gallops off to business. He would not quite like to give up family worship, for he was brought up to it, and it has become a religious habit with him ; and then he is a little superstitious, and fears that things would not go right if he neglected it. If you were to ask him, an hour afterward, down at the house of business, what he had read at morning prayers, he would perhaps say : “ Well, there ! it is very strange that that chapter should pass out of my mind ! Let me see ! it was about—let me see !—I know perfectly well, but I can’t just recall it at this moment ; but it was some place in Isaiah—or Romans—I don’t just call to mind the chapter now.” There is a great deal of that kind of Bible-reading, not only at family prayer, but in the so-called private devotion of many of God’s people.

If a business man should study the market reports in the same way that this formalist studies the Word, he would not know half an hour after he had laid the paper down whether flour was “ up ” or “ down ; ” whether his

stocks were in good condition or bad. But good Christian *business* men do not read market reports that way ; they attend to what is reported, and they regulate their business that day according to the reports they read.

Now the result is to these formal Bible-readers that year after year they go through the Bible, or a portion of it, and are but little better acquainted with the blessed Word at the end than at the beginning of the year. They have a vague remembrance that they have read certain things somewhere in the Bible ; and that is about all. And so these formalists add their opinion to that of others, and pronounce the Bible a dull book.

(4.) Further, there are the *periodic* and *spasmodic readers*. Not a few professed Christians read their Bibles only occasionally, or, as one has said, by " spells ;" that is, they neglect it utterly for days, and weeks, and even months, and then suddenly take it up, and for a day or two read more or less from it ; but they soon get tired, and little by little it is again neglected, and finally entirely let alone, until, after the lapse of another long interval, it is taken up again. It is not an uncommon practise with many, on the first day of the year, to make a " good resolution" to begin at the beginning and read the Bible through. This good resolution usually holds out until Leviticus or Numbers is reached : by that time the task becomes too wearisome ; the reading is transferred to the Psalms, or the New Testament, and this bridges over another month. By this time the good resolution is entirely exhausted, and the Bible is carefully laid aside to be used only as a book of occasional reference. Of course, little good can come of such reading.

It would be easy to lengthen out this list of mis-reading so-called Bible-readers ; but enough has been said to show how badly the Bible is treated by many of its

professed friends. I pray God that those into whose hands this little book may fall will speedily break fellowship with these slighsters of the Word of God.

(5.) *Infidel Bible-readers.* Let it not be supposed that Christians are the only offenders against the Word of God. There are hosts of people who are not Christians, who yet profess to be familiar with the Bible ; at least, they presume to criticise its contents and call its truths into question. It is a common thing to hear of some noted unbeliever who “ knows the Bible by heart,” who “ is a great Bible student,” and so forth. Such persons get a certain fame in their communities. They serve to frighten timid Christians, and to strengthen young people, especially young men, in their unbelief. They are the sons of Anak that stand on the borders of the blessed Bible land as the giants did in the days of Caleb and Joshua (Numbers xiii. 27—29). I speak of this class of unbelieving Bible-readers, because we are desirous of putting our young friends on their guard against them by showing them up in their true character. They are, in nine cases out of ten, mere shallow pretenders, and have no thorough knowledge of God’s Word.

If Christians in general were themselves more familiar with the Bible, they would soon put to silence these ignorant scoffers. These men have frequently been pointed out to me in the inquiry-room ; they generally get hold of some well-disposed “ worker” who is not thoroughly conversant with the Word, and then, assuming a great air of knowledge, and of supreme contempt for the Bible, begin to propound the difficulties and alleged inconsistencies of the Bible to the eager company who gather about to “ hear the argument ;” and it is a grand triumph for unbelief if the great sceptical “ Bible-reader” is enabled to pile up objections and difficulties

—quoting now and then a passage, usually out of its connection—which the unlearned Christian is not able to answer or clearly explain, because he has not made himself familiar with that part of the Word. Thus the infidel's reputation is greatly enhanced, and he becomes an oracle of unbelief among the ignorant. In his circle he is a Goliath, who daily challenges the hosts of Israel, and dares them to come out to battle. But the truth is, he is a braggart; and any David who knows where to gather the smooth stones of truth out of the water-brooks of the Word can, in the name of the God of the Bible, quickly knock him in the head.

The reason why so many are troubled by these scoffers and sceptics, who pretend to a knowledge of God's Word, is that they know so little of it themselves that they really do not know how to meet them. For the most part we have found these unbelievers, who pretend to great biblical knowledge, very deficient in minute and thorough knowledge of the Scriptures—in fact, amazingly so. Their knowledge of the Bible is confined to a few passages that have been used by infidels in all ages. For instance, they will generally begin with the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, flippantly and scoffingly speaking of it as the "snake story;" then they will come to Joshua and the "sun standing still," and will grow very scientific over that; then they will take up Jonah and the whale, and talk about that "fish story:" they are very witty about the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, Lot and the burning of Sodom, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt. Solomon, with his unholy concubinage, David and his sin, are sarcastically commented upon, and the question is triumphantly asked, "Is that the man after God's own heart—an adulterer and a murderer?" Then Pharaoh,

and how God hardened his heart, will be discussed ; but, indeed, we have already given them quite a large list of subjects !

Now the fact is they never discovered these difficulties by reading the Bible themselves. The probability is they found them in Tom Paine, or heard of them second-hand from some infidel lecturer, and then hunted them up. It is safe to say that not one of them in a hundred *ever* read the Bible through, to say nothing here of reverent or even respectful study. If any fairly well-instructed Christian should turn upon them, and begin to catechise them on the Bible, their mouths would be stopped at about the third question. Compared with a real Bible student, who has studied the blessed volume in its entirety and unity, they know absolutely nothing. If a man who had made no more exhaustive study of nature than these so-called critics have made of the Bible, should set up to deny the ascertained facts of science, he would be laughed out of the community in twenty-four hours.

That there *are* grave difficulties in the Bible is not denied, difficulties growing out of our limited knowledge and feeble capacities, difficulties which the most pious and most learned have not yet mastered or unravelled, difficulties which for ages have engaged the attention of the profoundest Bible students. But it does not follow that the Bible is not a true and inspired book on that account, any more that it follows that nature, with all her stores of wonders and mysteries, is not the work of God, because science is not yet able to classify, explain, and reconcile every fact and phenomenon. We neither deny the divinity of nature, nor the integrity of science, because there are unexplained mysteries in the world. Why should we say that because there are mysteries as

yet unsolved and unexplained in God's Word that it is not true, and cannot be? Indeed, it would be strange if there were not mysteries and difficulties in a book purporting to be a revelation of the being, personality, attributes, will, and operations, of the everlasting God. It is only a flippant and undevout ignorance that cavils at these difficulties and falls a-scoffing, where it were better if attention were given to the less difficult and transparently plain things, and wisdom from on high were earnestly and prayerfully sought to study the deep things of God. We have met but one of this kind of Bible mis-readers who had read the Bible through; and he had done so *once, twenty years before*, and yet he was quite celebrated in his town for having a wonderful knowledge of the Bible. In fact, he was a constant reader of infidel literature, and was for ever harping on difficulties that somebody else had pointed out.

But now let us have done with these mis-readers. Enough has been said of both classes, Christian and infidel, to put the young Christian on his guard against the mistakes which he is more or less liable to fall into, and the shallow pretence of those who will seek to overthrow his faith. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. In the next chapter I hope to call your attention to more pleasant thoughts and facts.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE.

Practical Hints—Get a good Bible—Money well invested—Wide reading—Consecutive reading—Regular reading—Topical reading—Read the Bible as an every-day book—Read it as the Word of God to YOU—Read the Bible freely—Mark your Bible—The three-fold nature of the Scriptures.

IN the previous chapter I have given some hints on Bible mis-readings, hoping that thereby you might avoid those errors ; or that, if you had been so unfortunate as to have fallen into any of them, you might at once set about getting out of them. But it were useless to point out bad habits or wrong ways of reading the Bible if I did not put you in the way of bettering your methods. I shall, therefore, in this chapter, seek to give you some practical hints which, we think, lie at the foundation of profitable Bible-reading.

You may think it strange, and perhaps trivial, if at the very outset I advise you to get a *good* Bible. I mean now as to its mechanical excellence,—in paper, letter-press, and binding. Avoid all varieties of Bibles that are printed on very thin, partially transparent paper, with small type, and stiff and unyielding covers. God has put it into the hearts and heads of the Bagsters of London, the Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, the Oxford Bible warehouse, and the American Tract Society, to make some *good* Bibles, that you can read and study without pain and destruction to your eyes, and that you can use without fear of spoiling. They are real working

Bibles, and will stand any amount of thumbing and marking, and general "wear and tear." One of these Bibles will last you a life-time; and this is what you want—a Bible for every-day use, and one which, through daily use, will become familiar to you, and one with whose every page you shall, through years of study, establish an intimate acquaintance.

It has been objected that these "fine" Bibles are too expensive. Well, that depends on how you estimate expense. A few dollars more or less is nothing compared with the comfort and extra usefulness derived from a good Bible. I have known young Christians—and old ones too, for that matter—who have said they could not afford to buy such a Bible on account of its high price (from 5 dollars to 12 dollars); and yet they could afford to consume that much each month in tobacco-smoke, or spend twice the cost of a good Bible, two or three times a year, in "four, six and eight-button kids," and in other matters of needless extravagance in dress and appetite, without even thinking of the extravagance, to say nothing of the sin, of such things. Yes! let me urge you to get a *good* Bible, although you may have an ordinarily good one now. Lay that aside, and "get the *best*"—a Bagster's or a Teachers' Bible, either the American Tract Society's, or Eyre and Spottiswoode's, or the Oxford, even if you have to give up your cigars, and wear for a year "two-button kids."

I would now suggest the following as being some of the most profitable and pleasant methods and habits of Bible-reading. At least I have followed these methods for years with untold delight and profit. I would not, however, bind you down to these; modify them for the better if you can:

1. *Read the Bible widely.* "Eat, O friends: drink,

yea, drink abundantly, O beloved !” (Cant. v. 1), should be our motto in coming to the Word of God. The Bible furnishes spiritual food for the soul ; yea, the best *intellectual* food for the soulful man. Why, if most Christians took no more breakfast, especially if that were their *only* meal for the day, than they take of Bible, they would not have strength to go through their ordinary daily duties. If they did not feed the body better than they do the soul with the food God has given for it, they would be starvelings, walking skeletons. And, indeed, if we could see the leanness of many souls—aye, Christians’ souls—the sight would arouse the pity, if not the contempt, even of the world. Do not snatch a few verses now and then ; but read chapters, many chapters, or even a whole book at a sitting. How many of you ever did this, even on the Lord’s day ? How many of you ever read the book of Genesis, or John’s Gospel, or the Acts, or an Epistle, through, *at one sitting* ? And yet I know Christians who will sit for a half day at a time reading history, or biography, or a novel : many even read far into the night. You would enjoy no book if you read it as some of you read the Bible—a scrap here and a scrap there, and occasionally a chapter or two.

Is it objected that there is no time for such wide reading ? What a mistake ! One might as well say there is no time for eating one’s breakfast. But you say, I *must* eat my breakfast. True ! and so I say, if you would have life, and have it abundantly, you *must* read your Bibles. I know many men who will read the newspaper by the hour who never spend fifteen minutes a day with the Word of God ; and many Christian women who squander hours every day in matters that, to say the least, are of no pressing importance, who cannot find time to sit down for an hour to study the Bible. But

we should *make* time for this duty, or, rather, for this sweet privilege. God has said, “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord” (2 Peter iii. 18). Oh, the hours that are dawdled away, while the soul grows lean for want of its divinely appointed and provided food !

Again, let me urge *copious reading*. Take great draughts of the water of life ; read a whole book, an entire Gospel, an Epistle, an historical book, or a prophet. Indeed, we cannot get the whole truth except we read an entire connection ; at least, not the grand sweep of truth that usually marches through a book from beginning to the end. Many of the common so-called “difficulties” of the Bible have grown out of the bad habit of scrappy and fragmentary reading, especially the habit of stopping at the end of a chapter. Remember that the division of the Bible into chapters is a human and modern work (for convenience of reference) ; and these divisions often break into the very middle of a thought, and leave us without the connection of truth. By the time we return to our chapter-reading, we have lost the impression of the previous chapter, and so begin again in the middle of a thought.

2. *Consecutive reading* is recommended for the same reason ; namely, to possess ourselves of the whole truth of revelation. When we remember that the books of the Bible are in a large sense interdependent upon each other, we recognize, at once, that if we are to really understand any one part of the Bible, we must have some knowledge of all its parts. Let me illustrate : you cannot possibly read Hebrews understandingly without knowing Leviticus. You cannot understand the Revelation without being familiar with many parts of the Old Testament. The Epistles of Peter are founded upon the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Matthew. James’

Epistle is a striking commentary on the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew ; for example, the Sermon on the Mount. Compare

James i. 2, with Matt. v. 10-12	James iii. 17, with Matt. v. 9
“ i. 4, “ “ v. 48	“ iv. 4, “ “ vi. 24
“ i. 5, } “ “ vii. 7-12	“ iv. 10, “ “ v. 3, 4
“ v. 15, }	“ iv. 11, “ “ vii. 1-5
“ i. 9, “ “ v. 3	“ v. 2, “ “ vi. 19
“ i. 20, “ “ v. 22	“ v. 10, “ “ v. 12
“ ii. 13, “ “ { v. 7	“ v. 12, “ “ v. 33-37
“ ii. 14-26 “ “ { vi. 14, 15	
“ ii. 14-26 “ “ vii. 21-28	

Compare the Beatitudes of Matthew with those in Revelation. It seems almost certain that there is a real relation between them. Now we do not suppose that the ordinary Bible-reader will work out so systematically such striking interdependences ; but by consecutive reading the mind is stored with the Scriptures to such an extent that the remembrance of one Scripture comes to the front while reading another kindred to it in another part of the Bible. With the general acquaintance that comes by comprehensive reading (which in its turn is only acquired by consecutive reading), we are enabled to answer many difficulties which cannot otherwise be explained ; for “ Scripture must explain Scripture ” is a true proverb and a canon of interpretation. I keep a little note-book in which I note passages that are “ hard to be understood ; ” and it gets pretty full sometimes. By and by, in the course of reading, I come across a text that doubtless I have read before, but it never *struck* me before. Now I say, as I think of it, “ Why, that throws light on such and such a passage that I have in my memoranda of difficult passages ! ” And oftentimes these two will solve another difficulty ;

and sometimes a single hour of comparison will almost clear my note-book of the accumulated difficulties of weeks and months. Certainly it gets filled up again ; but again it gets cleared, at least in part. The key is sometimes found in some obscure book, or sandwiched in between a long list of names.

One day I brought home to my little girl one of those old-fashioned dissected puzzles. She worked at it for a long time, and could not put it together. She could not make the straight and curved edges of different parts match ; and so she declared that they would not fit. I went to her assistance, and, selecting one piece, on which the tips of a horse's ears were seen, “ Now,” I said, “ let's find the piece that has got the rest of these ears on.” We did not notice the *edges*, whether they were likely to make true joints, but we looked for the missing part of the picture ; presently the lower part of the ears were found among the mass of pieces, and of course the joint was perfect. And so we went on until all was joined together. So, in a sense, it is with God's Word ; it has many contradictory or misfitting passages, to the careless, scrappy reader, who does not by *consecutive* reading get a knowledge of the whole book. But to those who read it through and through, the Bible, little by little, comes together with wonderful consistency and beauty. We may not master the whole book, but we shall find it so true to itself, as far as we go, that no doubt will be left on our mind as to its divine origin and perfect harmony. Indeed, it is this internal and constantly appearing incidental evidence of the truth of the Word of God, that comes to me in the course of reading, which more than all other evidences sets me intellectually at rest as to its divine origin.

In urging you to consecutive reading I am not igno-

rant that many good Christians do not see the use of reading such "dry parts" of the Bible as the minute ceremonial laws in Leviticus, and the long genealogical tables and other lists of names found in Numbers, Chronicles, Ezra, etc. ; and they are disposed to skip them. But read them ALL : you will find much good in so doing ; perhaps not at the first reading, or immediately thereafter ; but, undoubtedly, many things that you read will return to bless you after many days. If it is urged that the mind cannot retain so much, and necessarily loses interest in this steady, onward reading, let me say that, though the words and facts of the Bible may seem to disappear in your memory as water in the sand, they are not lost, but are treasured up in the depths of the memory, and will reappear at the call of the Holy Spirit, whose office work it is to bring them to your remembrance. Of course I do not mean that you are to use your Bible in no other way than by marching steadily and consecutively through it ; but that, beside special study and the reading of favorite portions, *this* habit is to be maintained also.

3. *The Bible should be read regularly.* I was not long ago troubled with a stubborn attack of nervous dyspepsia. Consulting a physician, he asked me about my habits in eating. He did not object to what I ate, but said : "How and when do you eat ? Do you take your meals *regularly* ?" I told him that I did not ; that in the press of work I sometimes omitted a meal, and sometimes did not get my dinner until late in the afternoon, and ate my breakfast any time between 7 and 11 A.M., according as I had been up late at night in the inquiry-rooms, or failed to sleep in the earlier part of the night. "That will never do," said he ; "you must take your meals *regularly*. Fix your hours, and con-

form to them. You had better let an inquirer or visitor go at your dinner-hour, than allow that important matter to pass by ; or you will not be able, by and by, to attend to inquirers at all.” I found this good advice, and, by adhering to it, soon got over my dyspepsia.

Now I am sure this law will hold good in Bible-reading. There are some persons who only read their Bibles on Sunday : these take a good meal on that one day, and then starve or fast all the week ; but that is not well. God bade the people gather the manna *every* day, and that *regularly*, early in the morning. So I think we need to set apart, early in each day, a portion of time for our Bible-reading and prayer. If we do not do it then, we are apt to let it go by. Many persons spend an hour a day on the newspaper, but have not time for a few minutes every morning for the Bible. Better *glance* at the paper, and *read* your morning portion of the Word reverently and regularly, than *read* the paper through and only *glance* at your Bible. Do you say you have not *time* ? Take it ! Time taken for regular Bible-reading will in the end save you many hours ; besides, it will prepare and strengthen you for the business and household cares of daily life. It has been my pleasure recently to be the guest of a lady, the mistress of a large household, with exacting domestic and social cares and responsibilities. But she was very fond of music, and had a decided talent for it. She told me that she found it necessary to set apart an hour every day for her practice, and both her servants and friends knew that she would not be disturbed during that hour in the day. She told me that domestic and social duties conformed to the habit, and she had no trouble.

Why should not every Christian have “one little hour,” or at least a half-hour, for the Book of books,

beside the other odd moments and spare hours? Were we to attend to the important concerns of life, or even the more common ones, with as little regularity and system as we attend to the spiritual culture of our priceless souls, they would soon go to pieces and leave us in great destitution. Even so will the neglect of regularity and system in Bible-reading lead to spiritual poverty. We may not realize it now; but the day is fast overtaking us when our poverty of soul and lack of heavenly culture will be revealed to our shame and loss.

4. *Read your Bible topically.* This brings us more nearly to the matter of *study*. By topically reading I mean: take up a subject and follow it through from Genesis to Revelation. For instance, take the word FAITH, and follow it through the Bible with the aid of a concordance. You will find about two columns in Cruden's *Unabridged Concordance* devoted to "faith." What a study it is in all its phases—its mighty workings, its relations to the life that now is and to that which is to come! How inspiring to study the workings of faith, as illustrated in the lives of those "who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens!" (Heb. ii. 33, 34).

Then all its cognate words, and its opposite words, "unbelief," "faithless," etc. Not only will this method give you a comprehensive intellectual view of the subject, but it will undergird your own faith, and strengthen you against the assaults of the great army of "doubters," who are always on the alert to surprise and overthrow God's people, as they did the Children of Israel in the wilderness (Heb. iii. 12).

Or, take that sweet and rich word “GRACE,” and trace it through the Bible. Here you see God’s heart of love in exercise toward *guilty* sinners ; and by the time you have made the journey through the Bible in company with grace you are sure of salvation, though the chief of sinners ; and this is to say nothing of the long draughts of sweetness to be had while lingering about some of these deep wells of salvation marked by this word. I have been told that Mr. Moody’s great career as a soul-winner dates from a somewhat exhaustive study of this word. He had been shut up in his room for days studying this word, until his soul was so full of it that he could “contain” no longer ; so he started out of the house and stopped the first man he met on the street, and asked him if he knew anything about GRACE. “What do you mean?” said the man. “I mean,” replied Moody, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and which hath appeared unto all men.” And right then and there he began and poured into that stranger’s ear the story of God’s grace, until the man himself was overwhelmed with the greatness of love, and yielded himself to God.

Or suppose we should take up the topic of LOVE : what depth and height and breadth and length is here, which passeth all understanding, and which yet it is given us to know ! And so on with REPENTANCE and other great subjects ; a concordance and Bible will soon put you in possession of all the counsel of God on these questions. But we need not confine ourselves to such leading works and topics. We may find rich mines of truth in incidental words. I have just been having a delightful topical study of the word “abundantly.” What a wealth of truth and blessedness is gathered about that word !

The following are a few of the topics that I have studied out in this way, carefully classifying the passages, and thus giving logical and symmetrical development to the divine thought: "Able," "Arise," "Abundantly," "Beware," "Be of good cheer," "Believers," "Daily" things, "Except," Paul's "Finally's," "Fear not," "Fools," "Follow Me," the "great" things of the Bible, the gifts of Christ from the words "gave" and "I give;" "If any man," "Justification," "Grace," "Faith," "Love of God," "Mysteries," "Manifold" things, "Now," "New Things," "One Thing," promises to the "Overcomers," "Peace," "Precious Things," "Paths," "Seekings," "Sittings," "Standing," "Walking," "Take Heed," "This man," What we "were," What we "are," What we "are not," What "we know," What "we have," "What we shall be." This list we might increase indefinitely.

I shall never be able to tell how much knowledge of God's Word I owe to this method of study. It is so simple and easy that any one may pursue it, and with a good "Cruden" you may always find suggested to you an interesting topic. Indeed, this topical reading or study of the Bible is the true scientific method—classification. The naturalist gathers his facts from all nature; then he classifies them; and so he educes his generalizations. The botanist gets his flowers, classifies and studies them, and arranges them in groups and families. The geologist gathers his rocks and shells, and classifies, and so studies. So, also, ought we. The Bible is the vast field of revelation: the facts are scattered over every page; we should gather, and then arrange the facts, the words, the cognate thoughts, and study them in groups, and so link and join them together in a systematic whole.

This is, indeed, the science of theology ; and every Christian should be a theologian in the true sense of that word.

5. *Read the Bible as being not an old but an ever-new book.* Sometimes we are apt to read the Bible with the exclusive thought that it is a very ancient book ; that its histories are interesting as *ancient* sacred histories, its teachings as *ancient* teachings, the sayings of Christ and his miracles as being two thousand years old ; but let us not forget that the Bible is a *living* book—an old book indeed, but a living book—not decrepit with age, but having an unfailing youth. Its truth is as real and fresh to-day as if the ink were not dry on the parchment page upon which it was first written ; it is as fresh and living as the Spirit whose breath is still in it. The miracles and sayings of Christ are not the words and deeds of a *dead man*, but the present words and present deeds of the *living Christ*. We read of his birth as having occurred in this present time ; his death and resurrection are not facts of nineteen centuries ago, but the pregnant facts of *to-day*. “The words that I speak unto you,” says Christ, “they are spirit, and they are life.” The written Word of God is a kind of spiritual telephone between the believer and his Saviour. We take the word and put it against our spiritual ear, and God’s living and thrilling thought comes into our soul. Not every word will so speak ; but, as we read, out of some word the divine voice will be heard. Let us then read the Bible as we would hear the words of the living and present God.

6. *Read it as the Word of God to YOU.* Do not think of God’s Word as a great storehouse of truth for the whole world, and so hold only a general relation to it ; but look into it to find God’s message to *you*. It is

the message of God to you. Christ died for "the whole world," for "every man." "God so loved the *world* that He gave his only begotten Son," etc. True, says Paul ; but when he draws near and personally appropriates Christ, he says, "*I* am crucified with Christ." "The Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20, 21). Oftentimes I am spiritually tired and weary, dull and stupid, toward God and everybody else. Those are just the times and seasons when an uninstructed Christian falls into doubt and despondency, and begins to reason with himself, saying, "If I am a Christian, how is it that I am so cold and indifferent and dead?" Well, in such times, instead of undertaking the hopeless task of "self-examination" for the purpose of finding "Christ within," I take my Bible, and with a prayer, *no matter if it does seem a dead prayer, no matter if it does seem to come out of a cold heart*, I say, "Talk to *me*, Lord ; talk to me out of thy Word. Hast thou not some word specially for *me*? Open Thou *mine* eyes, that *I* may behold wondrous things out of thy law. David says, Lord, 'How precious are thy thoughts unto *me*, O God ; how great is the sum of them !' So, Lord, wilt thou not show *me* some of thy thoughts and refresh *my* soul with words which I shall read !" And then I open my Bible, sometimes at random and sometimes at a "favorite book," and read, or glance my eye over the page until it is arrested by some word or saying or incident.

Sometimes I turn the leaves of a whole book ; sometimes I turn from the Old to the New Testament ; but I am sure to get arrested somewhere, and then listening, as it were, with my inner ears and seeing with opened eyes, my heart will begin to burn within me as He talks with me by the way, and out of the Word, of Himself

and his love, his plans and purposes concerning us, of heaven and eternal life ; or, it may be, He will talk to me of myself, my sin and shortcoming, and so search me and try my heart, and know me, and point out some wicked way in me, and bring to light some hidden thing. At other times I find simply the opening of a new truth or the fresh opening of an old one, and either by polyglot reference or concordance I will follow this sweet conference with the Lord through the Bible, walking and talking with Him by the way. Thus many a dull and dark time has been changed into a season of delight. Indeed, we should always study the Bible with reference to what it has to say to ourselves. This may help us to understand the difference between knowing the *truth* and knowing *about* the truth ; just as there is a great difference between knowing *Jesus* and knowing *about* Jesus. In the one case you have eternal life, and in the other case you are still a personal stranger to Him.

7. *Read your Bible freely.* By this I mean, Do not bind the Word to one meaning ; do not put it too severely into the iron mould of grammatical exegesis. It is right and proper, of course, to acquire a proper exegesis or exact understanding of truth in its connection ; but, beyond this, the Word of God must not be bound ; it has many more things to say than appear on the surface. It is true that no Scripture can be limited to any one (or private) interpretation (2 Pet. i. 20). What it may say to you it may not say to another ; and what you would not be warranted in putting into it *for* another. But we know well that the Scripture is not limited to one signification, or for one person's use. For instance, when it was written, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn” (Deut. xxv. 4), no one reading that would have supposed that it had any remote refer-

ence to the right of a minister to a fair and equitable support for his "work of faith and labor of love." And yet the apostle so takes it, and directly applies it (1 Cor. ix. 9 ; 1 Tim. v. 18). And so, who would have thought that the command given to the Children of Israel in the wilderness with reference to the gathering and the distribution of the manna, so that "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Ex. xvi. 18), had any reference to the law of beneficence? And yet the apostle so says (2 Cor. viii. 15).

Such cases of the use, and the divine use, of the Scripture, in a sense not apparent in its original use, might be multiplied many times. Now, in reading God's Word, we ought not to limit it to the strictest exegetical meaning, but let it say what it will to us. For example, I was one day reading these words to Abraham : "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward ; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it. . . . Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it ; for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17). You may say that could signify nothing to me, except as it might in some way be fulfilled in spiritual blessings through Christ. But it said something quite different to me. I had at that time begun a new and earnest study of the Bible ; and that promise to Abraham said to me that God would give me a practical understanding of all his Word, over which I should go studying. I do not say that it would ever mean that to any one else ; but it meant that, and still means that, to me.

A friend of mine, in great perplexity and distress of mind over the damage done to a new carpet and delicate

furniture by the tramping across it of careless and muddy feet, was brought, so she told me, into peace and quiet by the remembrance of this text: They “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Heb. x. 34). Now, who shall say—even though the cases be so dissimilar, and the dependence of the application of the text rest on the *sound* of a word, and not its meaning—the *spoiling* of goods—that God did not out of that Scripture speak to his disturbed child, and bring her to her better sense and faith? And how absurd to say, “You must not be so comforted; for that is not what the Scriptures mean!” It *did* mean that to *her*, and at that time.

How oft is it true that we have opened God’s Word, and found scriptures applicable to Old Testament saints in *their* need, have been the very Word of God to *us* in *our* need, though our circumstances are so dissimilar. God’s Word was written for all ages and for all people; but each one of us must read it and understand it for himself. Let it speak freely to you, and it will say many instructing and comforting things; and to this end let the Word of God dwell in you richly (Col. iii. 16), that the Holy Spirit may be enabled to bring comfort to you in time of need by calling his word to your remembrance.

8. *Mark your Bible.* I know that Bible marking can be very meaningless and very mechanical, and that many silly people have begun to mark their Bibles, not for personal profit, but just to have a marked Bible. I saw a Bible, not long ago, that a man had hired a Bible student to mark for him. I thought, Why did you not hire somebody to “thumb it” for you? the thumbing would have done him as much good as the marking did. The

Bible I most use is a wide-margin Bagster, the gift of a friend. When it was first given to me it was so beautiful and clean that I felt sorry to discover one of its fair white margins soiled by some one's dirty finger ; but now, its worn edges with its margins covered with notes, its pages lined, and its lines underscored, look far more beautiful. I have put the results of five blessed years of study *into* that Bible with pen and ink—here a little, there a little. A thousand precious things are stored up in that book ; with it in my hand I am never at a loss for a sermon or word of instruction and help. The best thoughts of many Bible students are tucked away on half-blank pages : the outline of scores of sermons, the indicated analysis of many books, the testimony and comments of saints upon certain passages. The help of this is—that you fix things in your mind and heart which you would not otherwise have done. On opening your Bible your mind is at once stirred with a thought or a memory. Indeed, every one's own Bible should carry the student's own spiritual history in notes—not necessarily intelligible to any one else.

When I returned from a delightful pedestrian trip through Germany, Switzerland, and Northern Italy, I took a little map and marked the roads I had passed over, the mountains I had climbed, the towns and villages I had stopped in ; and with my note-book and map I can retrace many happy days. So I have noted in my Bible the sweet wells of salvation I have drunk from, the paths I have walked over, the cities I have been in, the mountains I have climbed, the valleys I have passed through, the people I have met, and whose characters I have studied ; and I love to take up the precious book and turn over page after page, refreshing my mind and heart with many things, and so drink over again the

water of other days, and rest again at the many Elims I have found on the way.

I have heard of a Christian lady whose Bible showed the following marks on the margin, over against some of the promises and truths of the word : “ T.” “ P.” and “ T. and P.” Here was only “ T,” and there was “ T ” and “ P.” When asked what those letters meant, she said : “ ‘ T.’ means I have *tried* that promise, and ‘ T. and P.’ means that, having tried it, I have also *proved* it. There are many that I have only tried as yet, but when the answer comes, or the experimental knowledge of the truth comes, I make the completed note ‘ T. and P.’ ” How helpful thus to keep account of God’s promises by this system of “ double entry ! ” Indeed, I often say to my friends, I have two Bibles ; one, the whole book, “ from back to back,” from Genesis to Revelation ; the Bible I accept as God’s Word, on what to me is sufficient evidence. But then I have another Bible that is peculiarly my own—a Bible within the Bible—consisting of those scriptures of whose truth I have *experimental* and *personal* knowledge : and those truths not as yet tested by experience—such as “ resurrection ” and “ heaven,” with all that is therein implied ; but which are so confirmed *to* me and *in* me by faith that it is all one as if God had revealed those things to me directly by his Spirit, and not mediately through his Word. Of these I can say, my eye hath not seen, my ear hath not heard, neither have entered into my heart, the things that God hath prepared for me ; but He hath revealed them to me by his Word and Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). These things comprise our Bible, *within* the Bible ; and daily this inner Bible is growing. I think it well, also, to keep a Bible *free* from marks of any kind, that you may not be limited, or have the Word bound, by old thoughts.

Our marking, important and helpful as we think Bible marking is, should not be allowed to "bind the Word of God." You must adopt your own system of marking. Do not take somebody else's method. And yet you may find many suggestions that will be helpful to you from the experience and work of others. For example : I have taken a camel's-hair brush, and, dipping it into blue ink, I have passed it lightly over all those passages in the Word of God that speak of his love to man ; such, for example, as John iii. 16 : " God so loved the world," etc. ; and with *red ink*, and the brush, I have covered those passages that speak of the blood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament ; for example, 1 Pet. i. 19 ; 1 John i. 7, and the blood of atonement in the Old. It is surprising how *blue* and *red* your Bible will be, thus marked. And then, suppose you were to take some purple ink, and cover all those passages that are closely related to and are based on Love and Atonement, you would still further have your Bible interpreted to your eye at a glance. And then, for contrast, take your pen and run a deep line of *black* around those passages that expose and lay bare the depravity and sinfulness of the human heart, and the fact of the righteous judgment of God to come, and the perdition of ungodly men ; such, for example, as Gen. vi. 5 ; Isa. i. 5 ; Matt. xv. 19 ; Rom. ii. 6—9. But I forbear any further suggestion in this line, being assured that a hint to the wise is sufficient.

9. *In studying the Bible, we should remember that it has a three-fold nature.* So to speak, it has *body*, *soul*, and *spirit* : even as the Eternal Word, Jesus Christ. Its mere bodily form—the letter, the human language, in which it is incarnate, corresponding to his body. Were we to confine our study to that, we might know no more

of God and his will than an anatomist, who should do nothing but dissect a dead body, would know of mind or spirit. It has its doctrinal truth, the mind of God, which is couched in the words of truth ; and this we should seek. And then there is the spiritual sense, the real life of the Scripture, that lies beneath all. Let us get through the body of the Word into fellowship with the soul and spirit of it. The Scriptures have been likened to the Temple with its outer court, its holy place, and its holiest of all ; and so it has its mere outward casual readers, its scribes and doctrinal readers, and its high-priestly readers, who go into the holiest of all, where God Himself shines in their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HEART AND THE SCRIPTURES.

A great Bible student—Where the law of the Lord is to be found—The letter and the spirit—Inadequacy of human language—How apparently contradictory statements of Scripture are to be understood—Great and perplexing doctrines—Dark and concealed sayings—Necessity of inward Spiritual sense—The Scripture unfolded to the heart rather than to the intellect—A prepared heart—OTHER CONDITIONS OF BIBLE STUDY—The fear of the Lord—Personal consecration to God—Separation or retirement.

It is said of Ezra, one of the most famous Bible students of any age, that he “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it” (Ezra vii. 10). Mark the words : he had *prepared his heart* to seek the law of the Lord. This certainly is what every Christian ought to do. Nay, more ; if we study the law of the Lord, intelligently and spiritually, we *must* do it with a prepared heart.

The law of the Lord is the entire revelation which God has given us of Himself, and of his purpose of grace concerning us ; or to state it in another way, it is the revelation of his will concerning us in our relation to Him, and in our relations to our fellow-men, whether they be Christians or unbelievers. This revelation of his will also includes the statement of our position in relation to the world, to time, and to eternity : the whole life is covered.

If you ask how and where the law of God is to be sought, I reply it is not to be sought from within and

evolved by a dreamy meditation, out of your own inner consciousness. Some have supposed that the promise of the new covenant, which says, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Jer. xxxi. 33 ; Heb. x. 16), is to be fulfilled by the direct revelations of the Spirit ; and that, therefore, the written Word of God is not the last and only source of knowledge. On such a supposition, many of the ancient mystics relied more upon the evolutions of their own consciousness, inspired and moved, as they said, by the Holy Spirit, than upon the Word of God ; and to some extent this is true now of that pious sect of Christians known as Quakers. The result of this theory has been, largely, that every man who adopts it becomes practically a law unto himself ; and the law of the Lord, as written, has been put into a subordinate position, and, indeed, often set aside on the so-called authority of the voice of the Spirit, or the law of the Lord within. But if we are to know surely what the law of God is, we must turn our attention to what is written "in the volume of the Book" where it has pleased God to put into permanent form all his will concerning us.

But let it not be understood that the *mere letter* of the Scripture is the law of the Lord. For since language, spoken or written, is only the *human* and *imperfect* vehicle by which God conveys to us his thoughts, it cannot *perfectly* express to us the whole of his will. The apostle (2 Cor. iii. 6) makes a striking distinction between the literal and the spiritual apprehension of the law and gospel, saying "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life ;" and so also he says : "Our gospel came not in *word* only, but also in power, and in the *Holy Ghost*" (1 Thess. i. 5). And Christ says : "The *words* that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are life" (John

vi. 63)—that is, they are not mere vocables, but *living* vocables that have spirit and life in them ; therefore He says : “ It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing.” The Jews stumbled over his saying about eating his flesh and drinking his blood—not knowing that his words had reference not to natural flesh and blood, but to that which was behind the body, namely, the life and spirit ; therefore his saying above quoted.

We must avoid dealing with the letter of the Word in this carnal way. It is true we cannot get at God’s thoughts without the letter ; so neither can we get at his thoughts with the letter, if we do not discern the spirit behind or, so to speak, within the letter. For just as there is spirit and life behind or within our bodies, so the “ spirit and life” of the truth lie behind or within the letter or body of the Scriptures. It is not the face, or eye, or hand, or lips, or bodily form, of our friends, that we know and cherish, but the personality, the “ spirit and life,” manifesting itself through their bodies. We discern the life through the body, but the body is not the life : we comprehend the thought through the word spoken or written, but the word is not the thought. Just as it would be impossible to know the character and mind of a man by dissecting a dead body, so the examination of the mere letter of the Scripture cannot but fail to give us an understanding of the mind of the Lord. Beside this very apparent truth, there are many other reasons why the mere letter of the Scripture cannot perfectly express to us the will of God. Take, for instance, the following :

We all know that, wonderful as is human language, and marvellous as is its power to express and communicate even some of the most delicate shades of meaning and thought, there are yet times when we feel the utter

poverty of language to give utterance to what is in our minds and souls. For ages there has been, and for ages to come, we suppose, there still will be, a struggle to find new words, new symbols of thought—that the overloaded mind and heart may have a competent vehicle by means of which they may express themselves. Now if, as we all know, we cannot perfectly express even our meagre thoughts and finite emotions through human language, how much more must it be true that the infinite God cannot in human language alone give full and perfect expression to all his thoughts concerning us ! How precious are they, and how great the sum of them ! We think we can illustrate this poverty of words to convey the whole truth to us. Take, for example, some statements in the Scriptures that to the uninstructed reader appear to be flatly contradictory.

1. We are told in Genesis, that so great was the wickedness of man that “it *repented* the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart” (Gen. vi. 6). Again, “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do” (Ex. xxxii. 14 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16 ; Jer. xxvi. 19 ; Judges ii. 18 ; 1 Sam. xv. 35 ; Psalm cvi. 45, etc.). And, on the other hand, we read, “The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent ; for He is not a man that He should repent” (1 Sam. xv. 29). And again, “God is not a man that He should lie ; neither the son of man that He should repent : hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ?” (Num. xxiii. 19).

In these and other passages we are assured that while it is in the nature of man to repent, God’s word once given, his purpose once set, He will not, cannot repent. How then are such apparently contradictory statements

to be reconciled? If we are to deal with these statements only in their limited, unelastic, and verbal sense, we are in hopeless difficulty; for both cannot be true, namely, that God *will not* repent, and that He *will* and *does* repent. We may say, and say truly, that these statements are true, both of them, in their textual connections; but that does not entirely meet the difficulty.

We find the solution of such apparent contradictions rather in this wise: The bare word and letter do not and cannot communicate either the whole, or the exact, thought of God. We must put ourselves in the place and circumstances of those to whom these things were said. Catch the spirit of the words, and see what it is that God *means*, and what thought it is that He desires to communicate through so imperfect a vehicle of expression. Doubtless the intellect alone will not discover the harmony underlying this apparent contradiction, especially if it wants to find an occasion for doubt and unbelief. But the prepared *heart* finds no difficulty here. We may not be able to explain to the cold, intellectual critic the exact harmony and reconciliation between these and similar statements; but we know how, when in *fellowship* with God and his thoughts, we rest in perfect peace touching those things over which verbal criticism is for ever stumbling.

Just as in quoting a public speaker you say, "He said such and such," and you may quote his exact words, and yet have entirely misconceived his thought. His words may have been the best he could choose, or his vocabulary may have been so limited that he had not the words at command to exactly express himself. So says a friend who knows him well: "If you only *knew* the man, and loved him, I am sure you could have got no such meaning out of his words as you have reported:

you would have understood him quite differently. You have given your interpretation from a limited and, it may be, a not friendly knowledge of the man." So it often is the case that difficulties and contradictions lie more on the surface than in the deep facts of the Bible ; in the verbal expression, rather than in the living spirit of the Word. The necessary limitation of language has much to do with Bible difficulties.

2. Again, there are the great doctrines that have been drawn out of the Scriptures and formulated in scientific human statements. For instance, those of the "Trinity," "Election," "Future Punishment," etc. Concerning the Trinity, or the statement that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; that in each, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells ; that each is separate and distinct in his personality, and that all three are *one* God—the ages have been stumbling over this doctrine ; and, oh, pitiful shame ! the earth has been drunk with blood spilled in unholy wars, over words and formulæ in which controversialists have sought to bind and imprison the truth ; and we suppose until the Lord comes, men will be struggling with the effort after exact and harmonious statement.

Now it is impossible to put this doctrine into human language so that it may be demonstrated to the *intellectual* man ; but every prepared *heart* has come to *know*, without being able to *explain*, the mystery of the Trinity. Every man and every woman who has had deep personal experience and is in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has perfect knowledge of the *fact* of the triunity of God as it is taught in the Scriptures ; and as to the *how* or mode of this triune existence, though it cannot be compassed with the finite

intelligence of man, yet the heart comprehends it. For there are times when our hearts yearn and long for the *Father*, and to the Father we go ; there are times when it is God the Son we want, the incarnate God, who was made like unto his brethren, who took our sins and carried our sorrows, who was tempted in all points like as we ; and to Christ the risen and exalted sin-purger and advocate we go. And there are times when the heart longs for the encircling, strengthening, anointing, and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit, and to the Spirit we go. And with each, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are conscious that we are in communion with God ; and with ONE, not three gods. There is no use trying to explain it any farther : it is not in human language to do so. The heart knows the truth, not as it lies in the letter only, but in the “spirit and life” of the word.

3. Again, the doctrine of election has been a stumbling-block to many souls, especially taken in connection with the frequent statements in the Scripture as to the freedom of the will and the entire moral responsibility of man in sinning, and in rejecting the Gospel offer. When these two doctrines have been brought together by contending schools, they have been like flint and steel, from which the fire of bitter and irreconcilable controversy has flamed oftentimes into hate and ill-will. The intellectual and propositional difficulties growing out of these doctrines are as great to-day as they were ages ago, when Augustinian and Pelagian, Calvinist and Arminian, each sought to controvert the truth that the other held. The trouble, however, is not with the truth, but with the human vessel into which it is sought to crowd it. Words are too small, language too limited and feeble, for the truth. John Wesley and Whitefield

could not settle the dispute as to statement, nor could Charles Wesley and Toplady ; and yet all Calvinists and all Arminians sing, with equal fervor and delight, the hymn of the high Calvinist, Toplady,—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me ;”

and the equally beautiful hymn of the Arminian, Charles Wesley,—

“Jesus, lover of my soul.”

With the head and the letter, these things are impossible, but with the heart and the “spirit and life” of the word, they are possible and easy ; for every Christian knows both the sweetness and strength of the Divine Sovereignty ; and at the same time, he knows full well that he has a will that is free to choose and act, and that is responsible for its choice and action. What incalculable mischief has been wrought by putting the eternal truth of God upon the Procrustean bed of scientific statement, and attempting to compress it into the inadequate measure of human language ! Let these grand truths show as much of themselves to the *intellect* as they can through human language, and they show enough ; and we are content to know with our *hearts* what we fail entirely to comprehend with our heads. The heart can travel free and far afield after truth, where the head halts by the way and lames itself in stumbling. I do not say that truth should not be formulated, and in as exact statement as possible ; I say only that it is impossible to put an exhaustive statement of God’s truth into human language. The great apostle made a sublime effort at stating the mystery of the divine purpose of grace ; but he did not profess to exhaust the mystery, but crowned his effort with the eloquent and divinely inspired burst of adoration and confession : “O the depth of

the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” (Rom. xi. 33). So it is impossible to put into words either the love or the peace of God ; for of one it is said that it “ passeth all understanding” (Phil. iv. 7), and of the other that it “ passeth knowledge” (Eph. iii. 19).

4. There are many truths revealed in the Scriptures, that must be shown to us by some other agency than mere words ; for they seem to be written with the view of concealment as much as revelation. This is especially true of the parables : Jesus “ answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . . Therefore speak I to them in parables : because they seeing see not ; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . But blessed are your eyes, for they see ; and your ears, for they hear !” (Matt. xiii. 11, 13, 16). And then He privately expounded to them the meaning of his parables.

This peculiar hidden meaning is characteristic of the Scriptures ; and here, again, the written word is like unto the incarnate and eternal Word. There was always a mystery about Jesus that must needs be fathomed by other means than the ordinary understanding gained by study of the outward man ; for though He was the revelation of God, He yet concealed more than He revealed. The people saw that He was not like other men ; yet to all outward appearance He was *but* a man, and a common every-day working man at that. Still there was a hidden mystery about Him ; and they asked, doubtfully, who He was, and whence He came. “ Is not this the carpenter’s son ? Is not his mother called Mary ; and his brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas ?

and his sisters, are they not all with us ?” (Matt. xiii. 55).

All this was perfectly true, but it did not satisfy ; for there was a divine something behind all this that was not fully read and understood. And so men speculated and guessed. With one breath, they would say, “ We know that this man is a sinner ;” and with the next, “ As for this fellow, we know not whence He is” (John ix. 16, 24, 29). One day when Jesus and his disciples were together, He asked, “ Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am ? And they said : Some say that thou art John the Baptist ; some, Elias ; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven” (Matt. xvi. 13—17). Though He was then before them, and had been with them in close companionship for a long time, yet it was necessary that they should have a revelation from heaven, in order that they might really know who He was.

And here we have the Scriptures. They are before us ; the words are familiar ; they mean what words do in other books ; and yet there is a depth of meaning, a far-reaching *sense* in them, that they do not seem to have when freighted with human thought only. Like ships heavily laden, toiling through the sea, these human words, heavily laden with divine thoughts, sink deep in the sea of our human understanding.

What do men say of this Word of God ? Some, that it is a legend ; others, that it is a divine philosophy evolved out of the inner consciousness ; some, that it is

a human composition of far-reaching power and meaning ; and some, that it is a divine revelation. What do *you* say ? If ever we come to know the words of God, we must have a revelation *in* ourselves, that will show us the spirit of life in them which lies behind the mere words ; even as the Christ, the Son of the living God, was revealed in and through the flesh and blood,—Jesus of Nazareth. With what meaning did Jesus say, “ I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ! ” (Matt. xi. 25). The wise and prudent, searching with their heads only, miss what it pleases God to show out of his word to the babe or faith-spirit of man.

5. Again, there are certain truths in the Scriptures with which we are acquainted, and with the power of which we are in some degree familiar, and yet we *cannot* put them into words. How, for instance, can we put into words the consciousness of the Spirit’s presence in us and with us ? The Scriptures tell us of the Spirit’s witness with our spirit. Now we are asked, “ Do you know the witness of the Spirit ? ” We reply, “ Yes ! ” And then we are asked to describe it ; but we might as well talk of color to a blind man, as to an unregenerate man of the witnessing Spirit of God. You can tell him what God says about it ; but you cannot expound the saying to him. The blind man says, “ What do you mean by ‘ red,’ and ‘ blue,’ and ‘ green ’ ? ” and all the answer you can make him is, that “ red is red.” He must have the *sense* and power of sight to know what the meaning of “ red ” is ; because “ red ” is a word that depends on the ability to see, as well as on the objective color, for its meaning. So it is that there are many things in God’s Word which depend on a regenerated

character for their meaning ; they are foolishness and meaningless to the unregenerate. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). In this region of truth, *experience* is a prerequisite to understanding.

What can a man or woman who has never loved know about *love*? Such may read, write, and talk about it, but they must first experience it before they can *know* anything about it. Moreover, we are aware how utterly inadequate language is to express even *our* love for one another. In vain we seek to translate our emotions and feelings into words ; they seem cold, and tame, and meaningless. How much more is it impossible for us to measure out in words the depths, and lengths, and breadths of God's love for us ! Paul tried once to express it ; and, after using the infinite adjectives above, he broke down utterly, and said it "passeth knowledge." The same is true of "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Our human love, or sorrow, or sympathy, is as often expressed without words as by them. How often are we called into the house of mourning, where grief like a heavy pall has settled down upon some stricken heart ; how poor, how impotent to help, we feel ! Our lips are dumb ; the strongest and tenderest words are not able to bear up our thought, or carry a tithe of our feeling to the stricken friend ; and so we take the hand of the sufferer, and look into the tear-washed eyes, conscious that we can say more by the silent *pressure* of the hand, and the glance of sympathy, than by word of mouth.

If human language is inadequate to express our feelings, and tell our love and grief, our joy and sympathy,

how much more inadequate must it be to convey to us the full measure of God's heart ! While we read, let us feel after the unseen hand of God in the word, and search for those wondrous eyes, which used to awe the disciples into fear, or melt a sinning Peter's heart into penitence and tears. Again, let me say, it were as vain to seek after the life and spirit of a man by dissecting his dead body, as to hope to get God's truth by searching the mere letter. If, therefore, we want to know God's mind and heart, we must look for something besides words ; and, in order to do this, we must have the help of God's Spirit from above. If flesh and blood could not reveal the Christ, the Son of God, in the man Jesus, so neither can the unaided intellect of man discern the truth in the mere letter of the Scripture.

The Scriptures are unfolded not so much to the intellect as to the HEART of man. I do not say that a mind well trained for the study of the Scriptures has not its important part in that study ; but I do say that the Bible is a sealed book, so far as its spiritual treasures are concerned, to the man who brings *only* his intellect to the study of it. For since we have clearly seen that it is impossible for God to put into mere words the full and complete expression of his thoughts, and the wealth of his love and purpose towards us ; so it must be equally impossible for us with our unaided minds to comprehend, by the words of revelation alone, all that God has put into his Bible.

If we study mathematics, we bring to bear upon that science only the cold powers of our intellect. Our heart and soul are not moved by such study. The emotional and spiritual nature is utterly unreachd. Or if, finding a curious stone, we try to classify it geologically, that is purely intellectual business. Indeed, scientists tell us

that one of the first and essential preparations for the exact study of science is to absolutely exclude the emotions ; we must not, they say, be swayed so much as a hair-breadth by any wish or desire on our part that this or that may come out of scientific investigations.

But when we seek God's Word, we must bring the heart, that organ over against which it is revealed, to the study of it. The intellect is but the handmaid to the heart in Bible study. If we have not come to understand this, our Bible study is a failure. Let us look at this matter of the relation of the heart of man to God and his revelation. “The fool hath said in his *heart*, ‘No God’ ” (Ps. xiv. 1). It is the imagination and thoughts of man's *heart* that are evil (Gen. vi. 5). It is out of his *heart* that evil thoughts do proceed (Matt. xv. 19) ; and it is the *heart* that God calls for (Prov. xxiii. 26). It is a new *heart* that God promises to give, not a new head (Ezekiel xi. 19). It was “such an *heart*” that God longed for in the people that should serve Him (Deut. v. 29). And the blessing of the new covenant is that God puts his law in the *hearts* of the people (Jer. xxxi. 33). It is the pure in *heart* that are to see God (Matt. v. 8). These are enough, out of hundreds of such scriptures, to show that God deals with the *heart* of man ; and that the Bible is a book addressed to the *heart*, rather than to the head.

If you are curious to look further into this matter, turn to your “Cruden,” and look through the *nine columns* of that great book devoted to the “heart,” and note how frequently the heart is exhorted to attend to the words and commandments of the Lord. “Ezra prepared his *heart* to seek the law of the Lord” (Ezra vii. 10). David says, “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my *heart* said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek”

(Ps. xxvii. 8). In Ezekiel we read that the Lord said to him, "Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thy *heart*, and hear with thine ears" (iii. 10). God reveals his word through the *heart* of man to the *heart* of man. But this revelation is not profitable except it be received by faith ; and faith in God is far more a matter of *heart* than it is of the head, for it is "with the *heart* that man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10). "O fools, and slow of *heart* to believe" (Luke xxiv. 25). Obedience to God and his truth proceeds from the *heart* (Rom. vi. 17). It is the *heart* that God establishes with grace (Col. iii. 22) ; and so, on the other hand, it is the *heart* of man that rejects God. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an *evil heart of unbelief* in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). The Gospel is preached to the heart of man, and the effect of the Gospel is to *prick* some in their *heart* (Acts ii. 37), and to *cut* others to their *heart* (Acts v. 33). The Jews receive not Christ because the veil of Moses is still over their hearts (2 Cor. iii. 15) ; and men generally do not understand the Bible because they seek to understand it with their heads, rather than with their hearts. The Word of God is to be heard with our ears or seen with our eyes, but it is to be *understood with our hearts* (Isa. vi. 10 ; Matt. xiii. 15 ; Acts xxviii. 27). You say of some passage of Scripture : "I do not understand that." First believe it. You cannot know the flavor of a peach until you taste it ; so neither can you know the meaning of God's words until you believe them. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. xv. 16). The heart is the organ for the study and reception of the Word of God.

But there must be a PREPARATION of the heart in order

to study the Word. Ezra *prepared* his heart. But Rehoboam “*prepared not* his heart to seek the Lord” (2 Chron. xii. 14). How shall our hearts be prepared? The Scriptures tell us that the preparation of the heart is from the Lord (Prov. xvi. 1). Before our Lord was crucified, He told his disciples that He would send them the Spirit of Truth to abide with them for ever, and to guide them into all truth (John xiv. 16 ; xvi. 13). Now the Holy Spirit who is here promised to the believer as a guide into all truth is the very author of the Word : and if He dwell in us, surely we have all help at hand for the proper preparation of the heart and the understanding of the truth ; and He is ready—oh, so ready !—to show Himself strong to those whose hearts turn toward Him ; and God is willing to give the Holy Spirit to every one that asks Him.

The Holy Spirit in the heart, and dwelling upon us as an anointing (1 John ii. 27), is the first essential inward preparation. It is not necessary for us to have visible or even mysteriously sensible evidence of the presence of this divine teaching Spirit. We ask God for this great gift, and then open the Word in dependence upon his presence and help, and lo ! the mysteries of the Scriptures begin to unfold themselves to our delighted hearts. In the most natural way does this blessed Spirit dwell in us and do his work. It is as natural for Him to dwell in us, teaching and guiding us into all truth, as for the breath of life to be in our bodies, filling us from life’s necessary element, the air. Let us not make difficulties in this matter of the Spirit’s presence and of his work.

There are two or three further and important conditions to be observed if we would come to know fully the meaning and power of God’s Word.

(1.) "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Psa. xxv. 14). Do you ask me : What is it to fear the Lord ? Well, here is an illustration of what I have been trying to tell you,—the poverty of words. I am at a loss to know what to say : I do not know how to tell you what it is to fear the Lord. "He who does not know the meaning of this verse," says Spurgeon, "will never learn it from a commentary :—" certainly he will not from us. But begin a Bible-reading right here ; take your concordance and look up the word "fear" as applied and used in this sense, to an attitude of heart toward the Lord ; and then know, examine and see, if you fear the Lord. If so, his secret will not be kept long from you. It will whisper itself into your heart out of every page of his Word.

(2.) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 1, 2). Here then are two or three conditions : consecration, nonconformity to the world, and the renewing of the mind. Perhaps it would be well for you to begin another Bible-reading on these points. Be sure, however, that the Christian who allows himself to be absorbed with this world, retains its fellowship, and gives it his love, has barred his heart to the joyful understanding of the Word of God. If we want to understand God's purpose of grace as revealed through his Word, and be sanctified by it, and lifted up into communion with Him through it, we must break fellowship with this world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life, is not of the Father, but is of the world ;” therefore “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world : if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John ii. 15, 16).

Many Christians, young and old, are saying : “I do not understand the Bible,” and “I do not enjoy reading it.” In most cases the reasons are very apparent, and among them this one : they will not give up the world, but persist in these unholy, and in many cases, ungodly associations, which war against the soul and prevent fellowship with God—without which the Bible is a dull, dry, dead book. But come out from the world and be separate, and God will receive you, and reveal Himself to you, and wonderful things out of his law. Why is it that so many Christians make their choice with the world only to perish with hunger on miserable husks that the swine do feed upon ; when, if they would only live at home with their Father, they would have kisses, and robes, and rings, and shoes, and fatted calves, and such music and dancing as the world never dreamt of and cannot give ? “Oh that my people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in my ways. I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him ; but their time should have endured for ever. *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat ; and with honey out of the rocks should I have satisfied thee*” (Ps. lxxxi. 13—16).

(3.) Finally, when God has wanted to fill a soul with Himself, He has, in a noticeable way, separated him in body, as well as heart, from the world. A monastic life is not according to the letter or genius of the Scripture ; but God does often take his children apart to instruct them. Abraham, the friend of God, must have been

much alone with God ; Moses was forty years in the wilderness mostly alone with God, and other forty days entirely alone with Him on the mount ; Elijah was also carried away for a similar length of time ; John the Baptist was a wilderness man ; Jesus had *his* days of separation, and He would often take his disciples apart from the crowd, and instruct them and commune with them. Paul was a long time down in Arabia, where he seems to have had special instruction directly from the mouth of the Lord Jesus (Gal. i. 1). John was on lonely Patmos when the "revelation" came. Some of the early fathers separated themselves to study the Word of God. Luther in the old Wartburg, Bunyan in Bedford jail, Wesley in his secluded chambers, Madame Guyon and Fénelon in prison, learned their deepest lessons in the truth. Alone with God ! Alone with God ! How few of us know what it is to go apart for awhile and be with God and his Word ; and yet, if we would know the Scripture and have clear insight into it, we must have our seasons of retirement in order to be alone with God.

May the Word of God dwell in you richly ! And may the Spirit of truth prepare your heart to seek the law of the Lord, and go with you into the holiest of all, in the temple of truth, and light up the otherwise dark dwelling-place of God ; and then give you a heart to do it, and to teach the word to others !

APPENDIX.

For the purpose of giving you further helpful suggestion as to the leading idea of the different books of the Bible, I append herewith a list of the books in their order, with the key-words or thoughts belonging to each. This list of headings is not of my own making. I cannot tell where I found it, but think I have compiled it from various sources. I think I should express the thought differently in some cases ; but in the main I commend it to your careful study. You may modify it according to your own light and thought. It is given not as of authority, but of judgment and for suggestion.

It might be well to write in plain, legible hand these headings on the upper margin of your Bible, over each book, thus :

GENESIS.—“ The Book of Beginnings.” “ Man’s Failure.”

EXODUS.—“ Book of Redemption.”

LEVITICUS.—“ Book of Sacrifice and Priesthood.”

NUMBERS.—“ Book of Wilderness Wanderings.”

DEUTERONOMY.—“ Book of Conduct for Canaan.”

JOSHUA.—“ Book of Faith, Conflict and Victory.”

JUDGES.—“ Book of Failure in Canaan.”

RUTH.—“ Book of Typical Prophecy.”

1 SAMUEL.—“ Royal Government in the Hands of Saul.”

2 SAMUEL.—“ Royal Government in the Hands of David.”

1 KINGS.—“ Royal Government of Solomon and His Successors.”

2 KINGS.—“ Royal Government in its Decline.”

- 1 CHRONICLES.—“God’s Earthly Government, connected with the Throne and the Ark.”
- 2 CHRONICLES.—“God’s Earthly Government in the House of David.”
- EZRA.—“Ecclesiastical History on Return from Babylon.”
- NEHEMIAH.—“Civil Condition on Return from Babylon.”
- ESTHER.—“God’s Secret Government towards Israel.”
- JOB.—“Book of Individual Discipline for Learning of Self.”
- PSALMS.—“Experimental Holy Song and Messianic Prophecy.”
- PROVERBS.—“Wisdom for the World.”
- ECCLESIASTES.—“World too Small for Man’s Heart.”
- SONG OF SOLOMON.—“One who Found the Object too Great for his Heart.”
- ISAIAH.—“Comprehensive and Magnificent Prophecy.”
- JEREMIAH.—“Judgments upon Judah ; the Nations and the Latter-Day Glory.”
- LAMENTATIONS.—“Godly Feelings in View of Israel’s Sorrow.”
- EZEKIEL.—“Judgment upon Israel and Connected Nations, with Future Blessings of Israel.”
- DANIEL.—“Gentile Political History.”
- HOSEA.—“Israel’s Moral Condition—Past, Present, and Future.”
- JOEL.—“Universal Judgment and Latter-Day Blessing.”
- AMOS.—“Certain Judgment upon the Gentiles and all Israel : Future Restoration of the Latter.”
- OBADIAH.—“Judgment upon Edom.”
- JONAH.—“Judgment upon Nineveh, and its Repentance.”
- MICAH.—“Judgment and Future Blessing of Jerusalem and Samaria.”
- NAHUM.—“Judgment upon Assyria.”
- HABAKKUK.—“Book of Jewish Spiritual Exercise.”
- ZEPHANIAH.—“Book of Unsparing Judgment, and Blessing upon the Remnant of Israel.”
- HAGGAI.—“Encouragement in Rebuilding the Temple.”
- ZECHARIAH.—“The ‘Last Days’ Connected with Israel.”
- MALACHI.—“Jehovah’s Last Pleading with Israel.”
- MATTHEW.—“Son and Lord According to Promise.”
- MARK.—“The One who Meets Man’s Need.”
- LUKE.—“The Son of Man in his Service amongst Men.”
- JOHN.—“The Son of God in the Moral Glory of his Person and Ways.”
- ACTS.—“Christ in Heaven ; and the Energy of the Holy Ghost on Earth.—What Jesus continued to Do and Teach.—How the

Church was Gathered and Built.—The Progress of the Kingdom.”

ROMANS.—“Christianity Unfolded.—Righteousness, and how Man can be just with God.”

1 CORINTHIANS.—“Church Order and Discipline.—Our Relation to each other in the Church.”

2 CORINTHIANS.—“Christian Ministry, and Superiority over Circumstances.—Our Relation to the World and to them.”

GALATIANS.—“Christian Blessing and Liberty Contrasted with the Law.—‘Stand Fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you Free.’—The Spirit is the Beginning, Middle, and End of Christian Life and Power.”

EPHESIANS.—“Christ the Measure of Christian Standing and Blessing. ‘Together with Christ.’”

PHILIPPIANS.—“Christian Experience.—In the Face of Christ.—Perfection that is not Perfect.—One Thing to Do.”

COLOSSIANS.—“The Church’s Glories and Fulness in Christ, her Head.”

1 THESSALONIANS.—“Christ Coming *to* and *for* the Church, and her Eternal Blessedness.”

2 THESSALONIANS.—“Christ coming with his Saints.—The Eternal Judgment of Unbelievers.”

1 TIMOTHY.—“Church Order according to God.”

2 TIMOTHY.—“Church Disorder and the Individual Pathway.”

TITUS.—“Christian Qualification for the Ministry and Godly Conduct.”

PHILEMON.—“Christian Love, counting upon Love between Brother and Brother.”

HEBREWS.—“Our Apostle, Priest, Sacrifice, and Witness.”

JAMES.—“The Common Sense of Christianity; or, Christian Morality in and out of the Church.”

1 PETER.—“God’s Righteous Government in Relation to Saints.”

2 PETER.—“God’s Righteous Judgment upon the Public Christian Profession.”

1 JOHN.—“Christ the Eternal Life, and Power of Communion with God.”

2 JOHN.—“Christ and the Truth the Safeguard against Heresy.”

3 JOHN.—“Christian Hospitality to the Saints, and especially to Laborers.”

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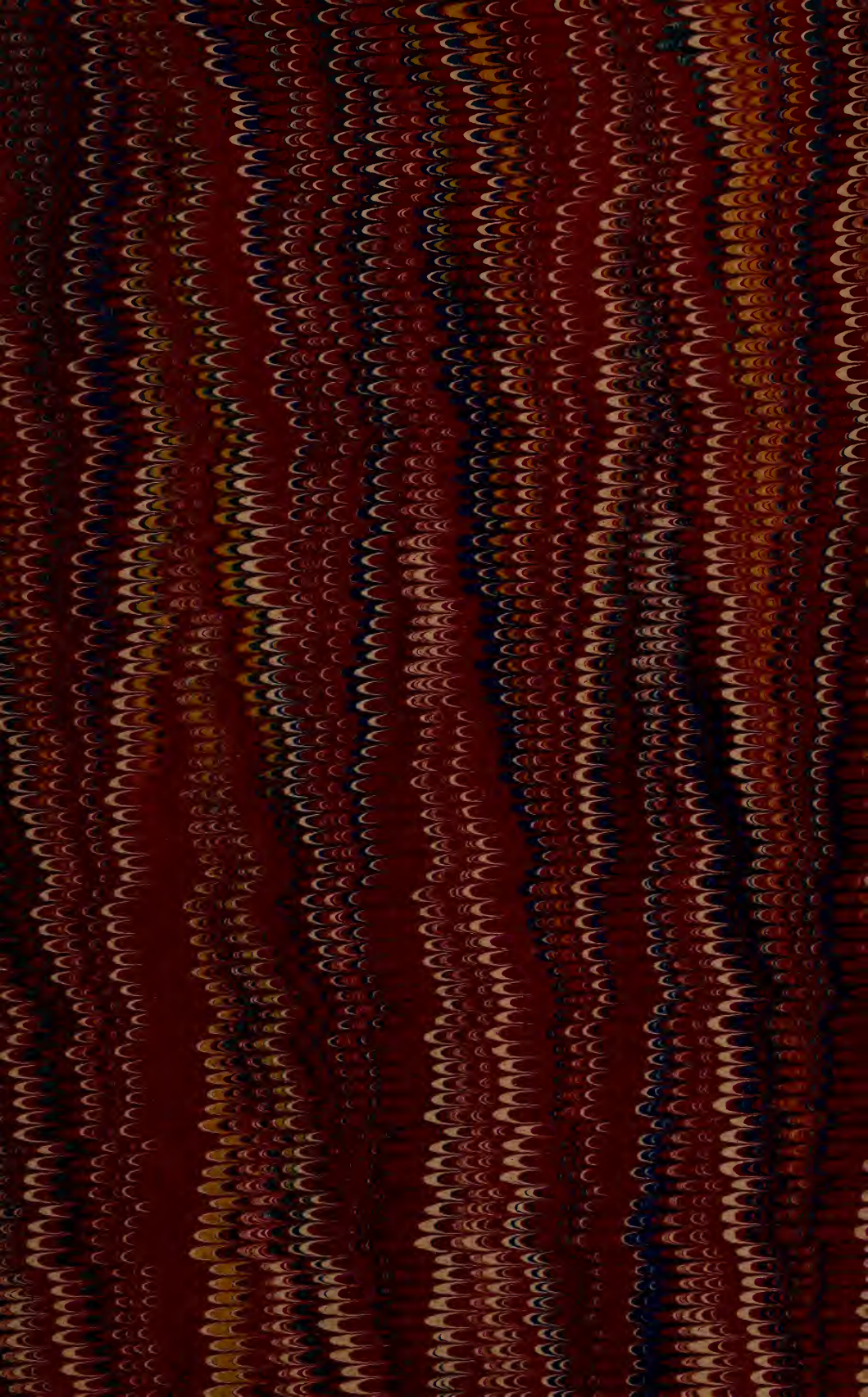
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